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# THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

## The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

WHEREVER you touch the armament industry it stinks of corruption. Already the United States Senatorial inquiry has uncovered enough evidence to show that the charges proved against arms manufacturers before the war are no less true to-day. Orders are regularly obtained by what Sir Charles Craven, Managing Director of Vickers-Armstrong, elegantly calls "greasing the ways." In plain terms firms in the arms exporting countries like Great Britain and the United States systematically induce small Governments in Europe and in South America to buy arms by bribing officials; these officials, sometimes, as in the case of Bolivia, very high officials, are in a position to influence their Governments, and, being bribed, arrange that the price of arms purchased shall not be over carefully scrutinised. Sometimes the arms may be of forbidden types. "Incendiary bullets," writes one of our frank arms salesmen, are forbidden; therefore we call them "tracers; what's in a name?" All this business goes on with the most perfect cynicism; it is all "very private and confidential"; everyone expects his "commission"; there are always "silent partners" or "friends in the Admiralty" who can be relied upon to see that the order goes to the right firm. The inquiry has incidentally shown that many firms, not ostensibly armament firms, but linked through interlocking directorates, are also involved in these investigations.

**Need for More Inquiry?**

The United States administration has already been besieged with protests from various Governments, including our own. These indiscreet revelations give rise to questions which must be embarassing to Governments. Every consignment of arms from this country goes out with a Board of Trade licence, generally confirmed by the Foreign Office. The letters of Mr. John Ball, Director of the Soley Armament Co., Ltd., seem to demand a great deal of investigation. How far does the British public really approve of the disposal of war stocks—in this case of an immense quantity of small arms—to China and other countries? How can we reconcile our pledges to put an end to war with the practice of replenishing our own pockets by selling arms to countries which would not otherwise be able to fight? So many awkward questions and so many persons in official positions are likely to be affected that we may anticipate a very influential resistance to the demand for a British inquiry on the lines of the American. We may safely assume that in some offices in this country particularly difficult documents are already being sorted out and removed to places of safety. The danger is that we may get an inquiry of the white-washing sort. The Senate's arms inquiry, like its banking inquiry, appointed a preliminary investigating Committee which itself seized the documents on which the cross-examination is now based. Without similar powers a commission of inquiry here might well be worse than useless. The question remains whether there is really any need for further evidence. Do we not already know enough to convince us that the Covenant of the

League was right in suggesting the abolition of the private traffic and manufacture of arms?

### Russia and the League

It is highly probable that within the next few days Soviet Russia will have become a member of the League of Nations. But there has been a stiff struggle of prejudice with common sense. The Great Powers, France, Italy and Britain, are eager for the entry of Russia; it is some of the lesser States, and notably Portugal, the Argentine and Switzerland, that have been captious, and have threatened to vote against her admission. There has even been talk of holding a Referendum in Switzerland on the question, but this has been followed by counter-talk of moving the seat of the League from Geneva to Vienna or elsewhere, and it is not likely that the Swiss will go beyond an adverse vote in the Assembly. There seems little doubt, however, of the requisite two-thirds majority in the Assembly; whilst as regards Russia having a permanent seat on the Council—for which unanimity is required—the scruples of the Portuguese and the Argentinians have apparently been overcome. A few fanatics in this country have also seized the opportunity to protest. Lord Charnwood, in a letter to the *Times*, rakes up all the sins of the Bolsheviks, particularly their persecutions and their propaganda, and suggests that the admission of the Soviet to the League must mean "either the avowed abandonment of the principles on which the League was founded or the conversion of the League into an organised hypocrisy." Has he forgotten that the prime object for which the League was founded was the prevention of war? And does he think that that is less likely to be achieved with Russia inside the comity of nations than as a pariah outside?

### The Eastern Locarno

That Russia's entry will be for the general advantage we have no doubt. Nor is there any weight in the objection that she is only coming in from motives of self-interest. What, in the last analysis, is anyone's motive for coming in except self-interest—the supreme interest of avoiding the calamity of war? There is no reason for suspecting the Russians of any more sinister designs at Geneva than the rest of us, and there is every reason to believe their influence will be directed to the maintenance of peace. The "Eastern Locarno" pact, however, which was to have been the sequel of Russia's joining the League, looks like being relegated to limbo. The German Government, as we expected they would, have rejected the proposal; it offers, they declare, nothing that Germany wants, and in particular it does not give her what she wants above all, "equality of armaments." There remains the possibility of a pact without Germany, but including Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Baltic States. For this the French are striving hard, but have not yet overcome the objections of Poland. If the Poles do come in, it is argued, it will leave Germany "encircled," but with perfect freedom to break the encirclement by changing her mind and coming in herself.

### The Nazis at Nuremberg

The Nazi Party Congress at Nuremberg last week was an imposing affair as well as an extremely efficient piece of organisation. The town and its suburbs were packed tight with Brownshirts from all over Germany, with the black-uniformed S.S., with the Reichswehr and Labour corps and Youth associations; and all these hundreds of thousands were transported, billeted, fed, paraded and harangued without a hitch. How far the opposition to the regime has developed it is not easy to say; it was, of course, silent at this gala. There was certainly no outward and visible sign that Hitler has lost his grip on his followers or on the *petit bourgeois* masses. His speeches were for the most part of the hortatory kind, with only a moderate admixture of truculence and threats. He got cheers when he talked nonsense—as, for example, that there would not be another revolution in Germany for a thousand years, and that the "emancipation of women" was an invention of the Jews. But he was also cheered when he announced that members of the Storm Troops were to be carefully selected and scrutinised. This is significant, suggesting as it does a parallel with the Communist Party in Russia, though of course Hitler did not stress that—nor indeed must the parallel be over-pressed, in view of his new relations with the Reichswehr. But the enthusiasm at Nuremberg, whatever importance it may have, is no remedy for the economic difficulties of Germany. How serious those difficulties are is shown once more by the publication of Dr. Schacht's new scheme for the further tightening of Government control over imports.

### A General Strike in Madrid

A month or two ago we commented on the struggle between Catalonia and Spain over a new agrarian law passed by the Catalan Parliament and denounced as *ultra vires* by the Central Government in Madrid. The Left wing parties in Spain side with the Catalans on this issue, partly, though not entirely, on "class" grounds, for the law would enable the Catalonian *métayers* gradually to secure the ownership of their land, to become, in fact, peasant proprietors. The general strike that broke out in Madrid last Saturday was an incident in this dispute. The occasion was a meeting of reactionary Catalan landowners, who were in Madrid for the purpose of discussing a settlement with the Prime Minister—or, to be more exact, of preventing him from agreeing to any settlement against their interests. The strike, which was organised by the Socialists, Communists and Syndicalists, was a gesture of sympathy with the farm-workers against these landlords. It succeeded in paralysing the life of the city for the day; there were some casualties, but no disorder on a serious scale, and all was over by midnight. Meanwhile, the landlords, supported by the Spanish reactionaries, held their meeting, at which they pitched into the Central Government and demanded that it should show firmness in annulling the obnoxious law. Tempers are up on both sides, and no end of the quarrel is yet in sight.

### The Maine Election

Those who thought that Mr. Roosevelt's popularity was waning have had a rude shock in the Maine election. If the Democrats can triumph in Maine they can triumph anywhere. No State has so long and steadfast a Republican record. Mr. Caroll Beedy, one of the most clear-cut opponents of the President, was decisively defeated on a straight anti-New Deal programme. The Democratic Governor of Maine, who just got home in

1932, is re-elected by an enormously increased majority. The betting is now that Mr. Roosevelt will at least maintain his strength in Congress in the November elections. The immediate results are two. First that the opposition to Mr. Roosevelt will look for new methods, and there are already rumours of an underground bankers' intrigue and a capitalist " strike." The second is that Mr. Roosevelt is in a far stronger position to counter such opposition. Indeed, in view of the extraordinary difficulties he has to face in the industrial field, where strikes are leading to bloodshed on a scale unusual even in American industrial disputes, nothing would suit the President so well as a new rally against Wall Street and high finance.

### Trade Unions and War

The Trades Union Congress has at least had the merit of making clear where the industrial side of the Labour movement stands to-day. It stands for safety, for marking time, for co-operating in rationalisation and control schemes for industry. Mr. Elliot is popular. It will have no truck with class-war nonsense, and it decisively refuses to commit itself to a general strike against war. If there is a threat of war it will call a special Conference and decide whether to support it or not. If it is a war for " collective security," if the cause is righteous and the war one to end war, it will fight. It is anxious to strengthen the collective peace system at the expense of national sovereignty. The minority which opposed this attitude and which wished for a challenging policy was overwhelmed. But it exists and is likely to be more vocal when the Labour Party meets at Southport. On the international issue we publish this week a letter from Miss B. A. Betts which represents the attitude of many of the younger rank and file. They feel that no Government ever enters a war without the appearance of right on its side ; that the present national States will never renounce sovereignty, and that unless the Labour movement organises against war beforehand it will inevitably be caught as it was in 1914. The threat of the general strike is, in this view, the one weapon which may make Governments hesitate to embark on a policy likely to lead to war. But is this in fact a " realistic " attitude in view of Russia's entry into the League and the general trade union distaste for general strikes ?

### British Farming

There was some sound sense talked about agriculture at the British Association meeting on Monday by Sir Daniel Hall and Professor J. A. Scott Watson. Both criticised, directly or indirectly, current views about British farming and present schemes of the National Government. Sir Daniel Hall attacked the sugar beet subsidy and the general policy of subordinating the interests of the whole consuming body to those of a small agricultural minority. Farmers, he urged, must accept a measure of control and work on lines laid down for them in the general public interest. Planned agriculture is needed, and that would involve specialisation in the most suitable products—especially meat, milk, fruit and vegetables, while the bulk of our cereals and sugar would be imported. Professor Watson dwelt on the folly of trying at all costs to employ more agricultural labourers, and of the belief that it is " a nobler thing to grow wheat (even if nobody wants to eat it) than peaches or strawberries." He argued for the " factory farm " and for measures of reorganisation designed to increase the output per unit of labour. The mechanisation of farming is, as he said, repugnant to many sentimentalists. But it should mean a higher standard of life for the agricultural worker, and more and cheaper food for the nation.

### The School-leaving Age

The demand for the raising of the school-leaving age, we are glad to see, is not being allowed to die. The recently formed School Age Council has Mr. John Buchan, M.P., as its chairman and Mr. J. J. Mallon as secretary, and its membership includes many names eminent in industry and politics as well as education. It is now organising a deputation to the Prime Minister to press on him the urgency of this reform. Whether it will convert the Government is doubtful, but at least it will call attention to the folly and shame of the present state of affairs. The raising of the school age is imperative alike on educational and on economic grounds. No intelligent person can honestly pretend that boys and girls have had all the schooling they want by their fourteenth birthday. It is equally unquestionable that the keeping of a host of children out of the labour market will diminish the volume of unemployment and its demoralising effects. The latest figures show an increase of over 31,000 boys and girls registering, which is considerably higher than the normal seasonal rise in juvenile unemployment. The total of registered unemployed boys on August 20th was 68,715 and of girls 53,941. The only argument that can be used against the extension of the age to 15 is that the country cannot afford it. If that were true, it would be lamentable. But it is not true ; we can very easily afford it, and the Government's refusal is a scandal.

### Anaesthesia

The current number of the *Practitioner* is given up to a series of articles on the relief of pain, a subject which in the past has usually interested patients more noticeably than doctors. Modern chemistry has been particularly successful in producing new and effective analgesics, narcotics and anaesthetics. The barbituric group of drugs have brought to thousands relief which far outweighs an occasional casualty. Evipan, again, is a drug which produces instant anaesthesia, lasting for from five to twenty minutes according to the dose, and producing no unpleasant after-effect whatsoever. It is therefore a blessing, for instance, to those dental patients who detest taking gas ; yet it is not yet used as widely as it might be. Fortunately the more intelligent doctors realise increasingly that pain and sleeplessness can be as fatiguing as hard manual labour, and will no more readily allow their patients to suffer from these unnecessarily than they would let them get out of their beds to dig potatoes. But some of the older physicians are still apt to regard pain and consequent sleeplessness as mere symptoms, unpleasant, no doubt, but comparatively harmless ; and when the patient begs for some palliative, they produce moral tales about drug-addicts who have been launched in this way upon the Road to Ruin, tales which date from the time when morphia had not yet for many purposes been superseded.

*All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.1. The postage on this issue is : Inland, 1d. ; Foreign, 1½d. ; Canada, 1d.*

# ENGLAND'S BEAUTY

EVERY year it grows more difficult to preserve what is left of England's beauty from the spoliation which is miscalled development; scarcely a month passes but a new beauty is threatened. This summer Whiteleaf Cross in the Chilterns, with its historic associations and lovely view over the Vale of Aylesbury, has been in imminent danger from the builder, while the Buttermere-Crummock valley, one of the loveliest in the Lakes, is threatened with development, unless the National Trust can find the money to preserve it before the end of September*. These current cases raise an issue of principle upon which the community ought to make up its mind. The issue of principle is this. Is it either necessary or desirable in the national interest that we should continue to preserve the beauty that is England's by the present method of haphazard acquisition of threatened properties by the National Trust at grossly inflated prices?

Let us consider the typical history of the acquisition of a property by the National Trust. The negotiations follow a familiar, an all too familiar, course. First, there is the announcement that owing to the breaking up of a landed estate, or the building of a satellite town, or some similar incident in the march of progress, a famous tract of country is threatened by the speculative builder. A cry goes up that it must be saved. An appeal is published in the columns of the press and subscriptions pour in. But although they pour in they are never sufficient; the necessary sum is never, at this stage, quite reached. At this point the owner himself makes a show of public spirit, and in spite of his financial embarrassment, due to death duties, estate duties and socialistic legislation generally, consents to postpone the sale for a few weeks in order that the necessary sum may be raised. He has even in extreme cases allowed it to be known that he will accept a lower figure if the property is bought by the National Trust for the use of the public than he would demand if it were to be exploited for building purposes. The appointed day draws near and still a few hundreds are lacking. At the last moment a generous donor, often anonymous, comes forward and makes up the necessary amount to enable the land to become the property of the nation.

Considered as a means of preserving England's beauty, this method is surely hopelessly inadequate. In the first place, it embalms rather than preserves beauty. Somewhere in the midst of a wild spread of moorland, of a fine old park or of an extensive tract of woodland, the National Trust purchases a few hundred acres to become the property of the public. We breathe a sigh of relief when they are saved; we are grateful to the National Trust and to generous donors. We are glad to know that this oasis is safe from speculative building and will be well administered in the public interest. But these salvaged acres are neither more nor less beautiful than the surrounding country. They merely happen to be better known, and known for some incidental and irrelevant reason—known, that is to say, not because they are intrinsically more beautiful, but because they include a high viewpoint, an oddly formed rock, a great tree, or through some accident of historical association. But, because they are known, they are purchased and preserved in perpetuity for the people. Meanwhile, what has happened to the surrounding country? It has been surrendered to the enemy, who proceeds to cover it with "desirable" residences. Thus the National Trust property tends to be a little core of surviving beauty set in an environment of modern vulgarisation.

As such it loses, at least for many of us, the greater part of its attraction. There is a certain artificiality about beauty so surrounded and preserved; it wears a mummified air like an exhibit in a museum. In surviving its environment it has survived also its charm, for its charm depended upon its being an integral part of a living whole. Take a musical phrase out of a symphony, and play it by itself; divested of its relation to the developing movement of which it formed a part, it loses beauty and significance. Similarly, if you take a wood of a few hundred acres out of its natural setting of stream and meadow and rolling open country, its spirit departs. It is not so much that its beauty is destroyed as that it is embalmed; and to embalm beauty is to make it a "beauty spot," replete with picture postcards, refreshment booths and discreet conveniences for gentlemen and ladies. It will be said of this generation that it found England a land of beauty and left it a land of "beauty spots."

In the second place, the method is terribly extravagant. It is only when beauty is already threatened that the National Trust steps in; it is only, that is to say, when the value of land has been artificially inflated by reason of the fact that it has become desirable to the builder who proposes to develop it that it is purchased for the nation. It is at this artificially inflated price that the Trust buys. In the present instances the sum of £3,000 was required to purchase the essential couple of fields at Whiteleaf, and £14,000 to protect (but not to purchase) some 5,000 acres in Buttermere. Thirdly, it means haphazard instead of planned preservation, and haphazard preservation is not much better than haphazard development. The obvious course is for a planned survey of the whole of England from the point of view of the preservation of amenity to be made *now*; for the lands scheduled under the survey to be bought before they are threatened, that is to say, at their natural pre-inflation price, and for the Trust to be endowed with compulsory powers for their purchase.

A precisely similar difficulty a few weeks ago forced the L.C.C. to take steps to promote legislation empowering it to acquire land by agreement in the county of London even though it may be "not immediately required." Mr. Strauss, Chairman of the Highways Committee, in advocating these steps, stressed the exorbitant rates at which the Council had been obliged to buy land in the past because they had been unable to make purchases at their discretion. The considerations which have weighed with the L.C.C. possess an even greater force in their application to properties acquired by the Trust. What of course is wanted is a Government department to supersede or to incorporate the Trust, with powers to make a planned survey immediately and to purchase areas at an economic rate before, not after, they are threatened. But this is already half way to the proposal for National Parks, which is the only real solution of the problem.

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* Of the total amount of £14,000 required, all but £2,500 had been subscribed by the end of August.

The Departmental Committee appointed by the Government to consider and report upon the question of National Parks gently blessed the proposal. They advocated the extension of the powers and scope of Regional Planning Committees and, where necessary, the making of grants to land-owners for restrictions and easements, and for the establishment of sanctuaries for flora and fauna. No areas were definitely chosen, though several were favourably mentioned, and the report concluded with the recommendation that an executive authority should be set up, with power to select areas, stimulate planning, and determine what monetary aid should be given—such a body to be enabled to spend up to £100,000 annually for five years. Mild as they are, the Committee's recommendations seem to have been too strong for the Government, for since the report was issued in 1931 no more has been heard of the matter. But England is being eaten up at such an alarming rate that unless something is done fairly rapidly none of it will be left. It would be a good thing if the Labour Party would supplement their agricultural policy with a proposal for National Parks.

# AUSTRIA SINCE JULY

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN VIENNA.]

THERE was a great military festival in Vienna last week-end. The streets were gay with the red-and-white flags of the Patriotic Front, with here and there the green and white of the Heimwehr, or the blue and yellow of Lower Austria; peasant costumes and Habsburg uniforms were abroad, and old soldiers staggered beneath their medals. A cenotaph was unveiled, and honour done to the names of men who died for Austria; to the names, for instance, of Francis Ferdinand and Engelbert Dollfuss. Planetta's bullet in the Chancery of Vienna might have been as catastrophic as Prinzip's bomb at Serajevo, had not Germany in 1934 known she was not yet prepared for war.

As it turned out, the events of last July 25th did not lead to war, and it is therefore possible, as the League representatives assemble at Geneva, to measure their results. In the first place, Italy to-day appears to be ranged on the side of the *status quo* Powers of Europe against the revisionists. The policy of Germany has driven her into the enemy's camp. While a few months ago Mussolini still encouraged the hopes of Hungary, to-day the Italian press is repudiating Treaty revision. Not long ago Czechoslovakia resented the ambitions and activities of Italy in the Danubian area, but it is now obvious that Czech-Italian relations have improved, and that Mussolini is working with Barthou and Benes to bring Russia into the League. This is not to say that the problem of Italy and Jugoslavia has been solved; it appeared, indeed, to be aggravated by the events of July 25th. It must always be remembered that, since the Croats hate the Italians even more than they hate the Serbs, the Croat difficulty is an anti-Italian incentive to the Government of Belgrade. King Alexander, on the other hand, still regards the French alliance as indispensable. It should somehow be possible, if the Franco-Italian friendship continues to prosper, for Barthou to persuade the Duce to modify his Adriatic ambitions in favour of African openings, which are really more important from the Italian colonial point of view. Italy would be wise to be reconciled with the Jugoslavs. There has been a lot of talk in Vienna of late about the encouragement given by the Jugoslav authorities to Nazi refugees, and about Marburg in Slovenia as a new Munich. The Austrian Foreign Minister has appealed to France to intervene; though there is probably no very serious anti-Austrian activity at present, it will require all the influence of France to prevent Jugoslavia from seizing every opportunity of taking sides with Germany against Italy.

So much for the effect of July 25th upon the affairs of Central Europe. Within Austria the new situation is expressed in the substitution of Schuschnigg for Dollfuss. No two men could have presented a greater contrast; indeed, they had nothing in common but their Catholic piety. In the place of Dollfuss's easy charm and flexible opportunism, Schuschnigg offers a quiet cautiousness which conceals clearly defined political conceptions. While Dollfuss played the child-dictator running delightfully from Uncle Pius to Uncle Benito, Schuschnigg, though younger in years, revives the Seipel tradition and compels a perhaps more serious respect. It would be too ominous to say that this is a less friendly Brüning; the new Chancellor is a shy, but not an isolated, man. Kurt von Schuschnigg was a General's son; he was born on the old Italian frontier at Riva on Lake Garda, and he studied at Innsbruck. If he cannot rally the peasants of Lower Austria as the peasant Dollfuss could, he is probably on easier terms with his Vice-Chancellor, Prince Starhemberg. With a Tyrolese tradition behind him, he will probably wish to be less completely dependent upon Italy, and the changes in international relations may help him to gain a wider measure of support abroad. The Czechs, for instance, may feel able to make economic concessions within a wider Rome Agreement. Schuschnigg believes in a German Catholic cultural mission in the old Habsburg tradition, but, while his monarchist wishes are well known, no one seems to feel that a restoration is visibly nearer. For some time Schuschnigg had made himself felt as the most serious member of Dollfuss's cabinet, and as the most important clerical counterpoise to the Fascism of the Heimwehr ministers—he had, indeed, created an army of his own, the *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen*, for this very purpose. Finally, it was he who saved the situation on July 25th.

As for the vitality of the fragile Austrian State, it is safe to say that the failure of the Nazis on July 25th has strengthened the executive power of the Government. Ever since Rintelen was exiled to the Legation in Rome the plan to make him Chancellor had menaced the Dollfuss Cabinet, yet it was always difficult to touch him, partly because he was popular and a brilliant intriguer, partly because he knew too much about administrative corruption in Austria. Now Rintelen is discredited by failure. The whole conspiracy leading up to July 25th owed much to high police authorities who were in touch with Germany; their failure has brought about their dismissal and disgrace, with the exception of the heavily compromised Fey; many minor officials, who had kept in with both sides ever since Hitler came to power, have given up trimming as too risky now. Moreover, Dollfuss dead is perhaps more valuable to the Cabinet than Dollfuss alive—his murder and its circumstances evoked a real emotional response which was not confined to his own political supporters.

Yet if Schuschnigg has the advantage of temporary alleviations, he is faced with a series of insoluble problems. Within the ranks of Government supporters the friction between Christian Socials and Heimwehr—clericals and anti-clericals—continues. To everyone's surprise the Heimwehr troops played up well in the July fighting, but their newly acquired prestige makes them more difficult to control. At first, the observer in Vienna has a confused impression of soldiers, police, Heimwehr, Sturmscharen, all tumbling over one another; later it strikes him that soldiers, police and Sturmscharen appear to be guarding the Heimwehr barracks. Few people would care to look too far beneath a Heimwehr uniform for fear of finding a brown shirt.

National Socialism still thrives upon anti-clericalism and hatred of Italy, and the more devout Nazis are as unshaken by July as the Socialists by February. Both have their heroic dead. The problem of Styria, that is to say, is as insoluble as the problem of Vienna. For Styria is a kind of East Prussia; the Styrian is tremendously proud of Styria as an outpost of Germanism. Protestantism is stronger there than elsewhere in Austria, and the Protestant pastors are everywhere notoriously Nazi. In August there was no one to bring in the harvest, because all the young men were in prison or refugees abroad. But there is more to Styria than this, for Styria produces first-class iron and is the seat of Austria's one giant heavy industry concern, the Alpine Montan Company. Over 50 per cent. of its shares are in the hands of Thyssen and the German Steel Trust, and the Alpine Montan has given its employees every kind of encouragement to be Nazi. Rintelen, whose influence in Styria was boundless, was closely associated with the directors of the Alpine Montan. Austria cannot afford to lose the Alpine Montan's market in Germany while re-armament keeps up the demand for iron; the Germans, moreover, seem able to pay their Styrian debts.

As for the insoluble problem of "Red Vienna," the only important changes to record are the waning influence of Brünn and the growing strength of Moscow. Some of their old leaders urged the workers to come out with the Nazis in July, but the Viennese were luckily too sensible to follow their advice. The Communists claim to have gained Nazi recruits since July 25th; it is indisputable that their numbers are growing, and that they now have a preponderating influence in the reorganised Schutzbund. The number of Socialists, who, while adopting revolutionary principles, have resisted Communist allegiance, no doubt still exceeds the total Communist figure, but the Socialists are weakened by the fact that the illegal Trade Union leaders repudiate political entanglements.

Schuschnigg has gone to Geneva to see what the League can do for him. The Austrian loan will be converted to cover the cost of the two civil wars. Apart from this extraordinary expenditure, the financial condition of Austria is "sound," while trade and industry maintain the slight improvement of some months ago. The tourist traffic, strange to say, appears to have been at least as good as the summer before. But it is unlikely that Austria can do more than keep up to the present economic level, unless the Powers can devise some plan more inspired than the reaffirmation of Austrian independence. The standard of living is still so low that men prefer to fly to evils that they know not of.

# A LONDON DIARY

I SPENT a pleasant Sunday afternoon in Hyde Park studying the broad backs of London policemen and listening to the remarks of an almost universally anti-Fascist crowd. When I arrived the counter-demonstration was in full swing. There were four entirely orderly mass meetings at which, I think, the general non-political public was scarcely represented at all. How large this counter-demonstration was, I cannot tell, but I should not scout the estimate that it amounted to about ten thousand people. I noticed that the *Times* in an admirably objective report said that the anti-Fascist processions "which came from all parts of London, took nearly an hour to enter the park" and made "an audience of great dimensions." It was odd, after reading this, to see that the *Daily Herald* was so bitterly anxious to discredit the counter-demonstration that it spoke as if it were confined to a "few hundred Communists." Unlike the *Times* the *Daily Herald* altogether failed to mention that Harry Pollitt and other anti-Fascist speakers urged their supporters to keep to their own meeting and not to go near the Fascists' demonstration. (The *Daily Worker* had re-enforced this policy on the previous day.) Actually, of course, a great many did join with the general Hyde Park crowd when the Fascists arrived. But they were called back to their platforms, and the counter-demonstration marched off together in good order. The Fascist lines marched in while the counter-demonstration was still proceeding. The Blackshirts were carefully counted and numbered about 2,500. They found waiting for them (several hundred yards away from the counter-demonstration) a large oblong enclosure created by a tight cordon of police. Inside it there were mounted police, four Fascist waggons and platforms for the press. The Blackshirts were received within this *cordon sanitaire*, and that was very nearly all that anyone saw of them for the rest of the afternoon. Over the heads of the police one could see gesticulating blackshirted figures who, one guessed, were trying to make speeches against the noise of the crowd and of the autogyro which hovered overhead. But I do not think that any single person, except a policeman or a Blackshirt, heard a single word that came from a Fascist platform. As for the display, unless one used a looking-glass as a periscope, the only glimpses one got of the Blackshirts were through the legs of policemen. It was rather like trying to get near the cages at the Zoo on a Bank Holiday.

* * *

Everyone agrees that the police arrangements were very efficient and that their temper was all it should be. But the real reason why there was no "trouble" was that the huge crowd—the biggest I have ever seen in Hyde Park—was all good-humoured and almost all anti-Fascist. Some counter-demonstrators who disobeyed orders and climbed on each others' shoulders to wave red flags over the heads of the police were restrained, I think, by their own leaders, and the groups that sang "Tipperary" and "The Red Flag" formed a tiny minority in the crowd. But they seemed to have almost everyone on their side. In the course of the afternoon I saw perhaps a dozen non-Blackshirts make the Fascist salute, while scores held up their hands in mockery with two fingers extended in the rude manner of schoolboys. In derision of the Fascist cry "We want Mosley," one group was chanting "One, two, three, four, five; we want Mosley dead or alive," while reminiscences of the fate of Heines and Röhm were reflected in shouts about "pansy-boys." There was plenty of jeering, but not the remotest desire anywhere that I could see for violence. Order reigned because none of the crowd wanted anything else. The vast majority merely wanted to let the world—and Sir Oswald Mosley in particular—know just exactly what they thought about Blackshirts.

* * *

I discussed the whole show with a group of friends afterwards. We all agreed that each Mosley demonstration made him look more ridiculous and that an army which needed two policemen to act as nurse-maids for each of its members was obviously very far from popular. But one of my friends who has watched the growth of Fascism in Austria from its beginning put in a caution. "I well remember," he said, "when the situation in Austria was very like the present one in England. Only a few years ago there were demonstrations and counter-demonstrations with barbed wire and machine guns keeping them apart. The mass of the population supported the Socialist marchers and the police protected the Fascists. After a time the police impartiality began to wear thin and they took every opportunity to attack the Socialists. The Government did not ban the Fascists, but on the plea that they had to preserve order and free speech, in effect, protected them." It was obvious, he added, both in Austria then and in England to-day, that a Communist demonstration that was "likely to lead to a breach of the peace" would be prohibited, whereas a Fascist one was protected. In Austria as the economic situation grew worse the Government became more and more openly Fascist, until eventually it made terms with the Heimwehr and collaborated with it in shooting down the Socialists. Before congratulating ourselves in England on our good humour and successful handling of the Blackshirts my friend thought we ought to consider the possibility that we had really embarked on the same development here.

* * *

Talking of Sir Oswald, I recommend everyone to pay sixpence for a pamphlet called *Who Backs Mosley?* published by the Labour Research Department, 60 Doughty Street, London, W.C.1. It is a collection of useful facts about Mosley's organisation in this country and of quotations which show the usual contradictions of Fascist utterances and policy. It is written for once without jargon or superfluous comment. It begins with a delicious summary of Sir Oswald's past career and opinions. I cannot resist quoting his own remarks when, in 1927, a meeting at Cambridge at which he was speaking was broken up by "several hundred undergraduates, carrying Union Jacks and Fascists' flags." In his own words:

> We have lost the good old British spirit. Instead we have American journalism and black-shirted buffoons making a cheap imitation of ice-cream sellers.

Again Sir Oswald accused Mr. Churchill of

> strutting in a borrowed shirt—a black shirt—which he had begged, borrowed or stolen from Signor Mussolini.

Finally:

> The greatest danger to peace in Europe . . . is the growth of Fascist power in Italy and its alliance with Great Britain.

I have only two complaints to make against this admirably restrained and therefore effective pamphlet. The first is that it does not really tell you who backs Mosley—though it gives some useful hints about Fascist finances. The second is that it gives a list of guests at the January Club, implying that the guests as well as the members are necessarily Fascist sympathisers. This is, in some cases, a comic error, for the January Club invites on occasion its known enemies to state their case against Fascism. This is the case, for instance, with Major Nathan, M.P., who is stupidly listed here. "Critic" himself was asked to go to an "objectors' meeting" of the January Club, and might have gone too, if the "invitation"—so it was called—had not proved to be an invitation to pay 8*s*. 6*d*. for dinner!

* * *

Years ago I read a satirical poem by Charlotte Perkins Stetson which told of the contemptuous anger of the now extinct beasts who once formed the ruling class in the days when little eohippos first dreamt of developing into a horse.

> "What! You a fine tall beast with hooves to gallop on.
> Why you'd have to change your nature," said the Loxolophodon.

The story was repeated with variations when the first anthropoid man conceived of civilisation:

My friends, in course of time
We shall be civilised.
We're going to live in cities,
We're going to fight in wars,
We're going to eat three meals a day
Without the natural cause.
We're going to put great piles of stuff
Outside our natural skins,
We're going to have Diseases,
And Accomplishments and Sins.

He was refuted, of course, by a sage who told him it was impossible to change human nature.

* * *

I was reminded of this poem by a cogent little leaflet on the *Political Aspects of the Operation of International Air Routes*. It is written by Mr. Woods Humphrey, the Managing Director of Imperial Airways, and is distributed from Airway Terminus. It gives an excellent outline of the contest between nationalism and air development, beginning with the abortive conference of 1909 when the German delegate desired

> the adoption of the declaration that the navigation of the air above all foreign countries should, in principle, be free.

This was negatived by the British Government, who said

> No regulations should be framed which in any way exclude or limit the right of any State to prescribe the conditions in which the air above its territory should be navigated.

And from that day the principle of sovereign rights over the air has held, so that to-day as Mr. Woods Humphrey suggests, national reservations and restrictions seem likely completely to discount the advantages of an international air service. Comparing the situation with shipping he writes:

> Had the enshackling arrangements which now beset air transport been followed in the marine world it is no exaggeration to say that civilisation as we know it to-day would not have existed.

When it comes to discussing remedies he says that there are two—the internationalisation of air transport and certain legal changes which would apply shipping principles to the air. He favours the latter, not because there are undoubtedly immense obstacles in the way of internationalisation but because "Human nature being what it is, it simply could not be achieved." Would it not have been better simply to say, "I am not in favour of internationalising air transport because I do not want to, and know, even if I did, that it would be a long and difficult job to persuade people to give up the idea of national sovereignty"? Is not that all that is meant by "human nature being what it is"?

* * *

I take the following from a press report of the British Association.

> An educational experiment in which an Indiana professor and his wife adopted a female chimpanzee and reared her in exactly the same way as their own son, was referred to . . . at the meeting of the British Association yesterday . . . The result of this novel experiment was that the chimpanzee remained a chimpanzee and the child a child.

CRITIC

## THIS ENGLAND

**Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. K. V. Brown.**

**All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.**

Home offered by lady in Surrey country house to companionable, domesticated, god-loving, garden-minded, contract-playing Gentlewoman (35-40).—Advt. in the *Times*.

The end of the [anti-noise] campaign, if it is successful, will be the production of a gun-shy generation which will quiver resentfully at the sound of a tapping hammer. What, it is possible to ask, will be the effect of any future war on these poor children's nerves? Dropping bombs and bursting high explosive shells are not tranquil and restful, and it would be unfortunate if an army were to perish of shock in the first noisy minutes of an engagement. But war, perhaps, is to the true silence enthusiast just one more big noise to be hushed.—*Evening News*.

An offer to send three Communists to Russia was made by Mr. Alfred Denville, Conservative M.P. for Newcastle Central, at a meeting in his constituency last night. About fifty people at once volunteered. . . . After the meeting he said he intended to try and export Communists to Russia three by three, until England was left for the English.—*Daily Telegraph*.

### COLOURS FOR FACES.

The new colour, a deep maroon, somewhere between plum and wine in colour, is delightful in itself; but people would do well to consult their complexions before adopting what an enthusiastic exhibitor described as "the domineering colour."—*Observer*.

Miss J. C. MacL. (Perthshire).—There's nothing I can suggest; at sixty, one is bound to be gradually the worse for wear. If it isn't one thing, it's another. So long as we face life *and* death undismayed, it's all right. Only I doubt, very much, that soup is good for you: of course it all depends how the soup is made, and what it's made of.—*British Weekly*.

Councillor —— desires to thank all friends for their kind inquiries and good wishes which proved so enervating and encouraging during his period of convalescence following his recent accident.—Advt.

A solicitor declined to go any further with his defence in a street betting case at Liverpool yesterday when the police produced photographs of the incidents alleged. "I think the police go beyond all bounds," he said, "when they bring photographs here. What chance does it give a struggling advocate?"—*Morning Post*.

Sir Oswald was sung down, flagged down, hooted down, and roared down. His 20 minutes' "speech" was an example of dauntless resolve.—*Daily Mail*, Sept. 10th.

He (Sir Oswald) thought the opposition weaker than he had expected, and he was impressed, he said, by the fact that it was a definitely Fascist crowd!—*Liverpool Daily Post*, Sept. 10th.

# MY YEAR IN THE SCRUBS

In a recent article in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION Dr. Harry Roberts referred to a friend of his who was undergoing a sentence in Wormwood Scrubs Prison. He threw out a hint that possibly his friend would himself describe his experiences. I am that individual, and as, thanks to my "good conduct" and the reduction of sentence consequent thereon, I am now at liberty, I am writing down some of my impressions whilst they are still fresh in my memory.

The first impact of the prison is an aural one, for newcomers arrive in closed vans. The noises of the opening and shutting of the gates give a fearful impression of finality. After a short journey within the walls, comes the first sight of prison. Jangling keys, barred windows, and the high walls all contribute to give a feeling of impotence. Immediately one enters the "reception" wing the odd odour, like that of a crowded underground station, only cold, strikes an unforgettable note.

My sentence was one of eighteen months' imprisonment. My counsel had optimistically predicted a much shorter one, so that my first reaction had been one of self-commiseration. Being catalogued and put into prison uniform had some of the distractive quality of strange happenings, and, as often occurs with unaccustomed and dreaded events, the realities of imprisonment proved less painful than had been the anticipation of them. Nevertheless, for the first eight weeks or so, a sort of probationary period, I found the process of adjustment almost unbearable; self-pity and claustrophobia took alternate possession of my emotions. Funnily enough, it was not until after this period that I experienced any sense of shame or humiliation.

The prison covers about a quarter of a square mile, and the enclosing wall must be nearly three-quarters of a mile in length. The cells are built into four vast halls, each nearly two hundred yards long, arranged in two parallel rows about thirty feet apart and three storeys high. The halls are walled in at each end, with the stained wooden under-surface of the roof visible nearly fifty feet above. Each storey or landing (there are four with the ground floor) has eighty-eight identical cells. Access to them is by way of two series of narrow iron stairways one person wide, one stairway being at each end of the hall, and then by a narrow slate-surfaced landing, going completely round the upper storey, like the gallery in the British Museum Reading Room. Each cell is about eight feet by twelve, with wooden furniture and enamelled utensils. There is a small window, heavily barred, set high in the outside wall. The electric light is operated from an outside switch. The four halls run from north to south, and are separated by the various workshops. There are carpenter's, canvas, tailor's, shoemaker's and brushmaker's shops, and also the library, hospital, laundry and cook-house. All walls are of yellow brick, solid and with stone surrounds to doors and windows (into which iron bars are cemented). The spare ground is given up to exercise yards and vegetable beds.

On the hygienic side I found very little to complain about. The dietary provided is, of course, Spartan in its untemptingness; but hunger quickly defeats the food-shy. Faddists and religionists have no just grievance on this point, for special diets are provided for both Jew and vegetarian. Disease has the attention of what seemed to me a superabundance of doctors. On the spiritual and emotional side I found things less satisfactory; any tendency to morbidity is intensified by the long hours of confinement during the primary stage—one is locked in from five-thirty p.m. to six o'clock next morning.

The hours of labour are from eight o'clock in the morning until five-thirty, and during working hours there is opportunity for some conversation. Once every four weeks, a letter may be written on a sheet of paper officially supplied, and once a month three friends may visit together. Every week there is a lecture and, usually, a concert; but there remain those long hours of solitary confinement with only two books a week to read.

During the succeeding six weeks, the number of books allowed is doubled; and letters may be written and visits received from friends at three-weekly instead of four-weekly intervals.

After these initial periods under more or less real prison conditions one is very ready to enjoy the additional privileges attending the third stage. One may now go to the library and choose for oneself books up to six a week. Meals, instead of being eaten in the cell, are taken at tables on the ground floor of the hall where there is every opportunity for associating with any of the other men. This third stage lasts also for six weeks, at the end of which at least twenty weeks have gone by. Promotion to the fourth and final stage brings many valuable privileges. To begin with, visits are "open"; that is, one may sit with and touch one's friends instead of having to talk to them through a sheet of plate glass in an embarrassing sort of cage. In the evenings the fourth stagers have a Recreation Room containing ping-pong tables, a wireless set and a piano, and the daily newspapers. During the customary school terms there are courses of lectures in subjects varying from modern languages and music to practical subjects like electricity and bricklaying. The instruction is provided by a large number of voluntary and excellent tutors. The educational and pleasure-giving qualities of the classes are immense. The sight of parties of men going to and fro with text- and note-books under their arms is very unprisonlike.

Certain of the men are chosen as Leaders. They have authority to conduct men around the prison and to supervise them at meal-times and during exercise. This is rather like the prefect system and works admirably. Trusting men and putting them on their honour in this way promotes self-respect more than does any other thing in the prison routine.

Every month a party of well-known actors and actresses give a play. I doubt whether there is anywhere a more appreciative audience. At Christmas time the same people give a variety show. The men themselves give a Christmas entertainment too, in which they guy the diet and refer to the officers by their nicknames. There is a special Christmas issue of very good plum-pudding, and everyone plays the gourmet—eight ounces is not enough for the gourmand. On the other holidays there are organised sports and boxing tournaments in competition for a simple, but prized, brass shield.

So far as the outward conditions go, existence at Wormwood Scrubs is far removed from the common conception of prison life; but I do not think that the many privileges diminish the deterrent effect. To the normally sensitive the sense of humiliation and shame are very real. Though efforts are made to minimise their effects, nearly all the men suffer from emotional depression and apathy. It is a simple matter to take the punishment in the right way under the conditions obtaining at Wormwood Scrubs, but it is always a frightening thing to contemplate a new life. Going out is just as fateful as coming in. It is more important because the reconditioned values are fragile and uncertain. The circle of wandering ideas set around the future social contact is a constant mental burden and interferes with consecutive thought. There are in prison no new contacts or things to see. The only appeal to the aesthetic sense is made by the lovely chapel and its constant serenity. After the first few months or so apathy takes the place of many of the earlier reactions, so that all initiative calls for constant effort. I have heard it suggested by both officers and men that sentences should be shorter and more rigorous, with the rider that all magistrates and judges should have a qualifying experience of the punishment.

Although only first offenders are sent to this prison there is room for an even more intense classification. There is an obvious difference between a man who has committed his first offence and another who has been found out for the first time. The varying standard of education raises another problem. It is often said that having to live in such a mixed community is itself a punishment. The officers have an extremely difficult and unenviable task, but they perform it admirably.

It is only because of the good use they make of their powers that the system is so successful.

In retrospect, the interlude seems to me to have been not really painful, yet definitely correctional. I suppose it is impossible to find a substitute for imprisonment, but it is both possible and desirable to shorten sentences. Penal servitude can only unfit a man for re-entrance into society.

NUMBER " 11341 "

## LABOUR POLICY AND WAR

SIR,—It is a gloomy thought indeed that on the major political issue of the day, the question of organising peace and resisting war, the leaders of the Labour Movement have failed to give a courageous and practical lead.

After the Hastings Conference the Labour Party was left with two conflicting decisions on peace and war. The one committed it to reliance on the League, disarmament and an international police force; the other placed on record the Conference's conviction that " the working class of any country has no quarrel with the working class of any other country " and called on the National Executive, in conjunction with the Trade Union and Co-operative Movements, to consider what steps, including a general strike, should be taken to organise working-class opposition in the event of war or threat of war. The first decision had behind it the traditional weight of " Uncle Arthur's " prestige. The second embodied the opinion of the younger element, impatient for a realist class policy, though this fact was obscured by the purely pacifist support which the resolution also received. The Joint Statement now published by the Labour Party Executive and the General Council of the T.U.C. resolves this conflict by eliminating the general strike policy. " Uncle Arthur " wins. But the younger element will not be silenced.

The statement concerns itself solely with the policy of a future Labour Government. It gives no lead on the dangers of the moment. The failure to do this is due to the philosophy which governs its approach. Its argument is the idealist one that it is possible, through education by example, to superimpose upon the present world structure of nation states with capitalist governments a World Co-operative Commonwealth, recognising the brotherhood of man. The League of Nations is the instrument by which this World Co-operative Commonwealth is to be built up. The whole policy of a Labour Government should consist, therefore, in extending and perfecting this machinery.

Clearly, the general strike has no place in such a policy. On this basis, war resistance—one of the duties of every person's world citizenship—becomes an individualist affair, the passive resistance of private persons to their Government if it violates its obligations under a collective peace system; whereas the general strike is essentially, and was intended by those who drafted the Hastings resolution to be so considered, an organised class weapon.

The question is not whether Socialists would *prefer* to solve international disputes by arbitration rather than by force; it is whether, in a world organised into capitalist units, impartial justice can in fact be obtained and enforced. The Liberal argues that the nations have, within their own boundaries, succeeded in abolishing private warfare and have established courts of justice which administer the laws of the land impartially. It is true that, speaking for our own country, justice can be obtained within the limit of the laws—the recent acquittal of Tom Mann is one example. Our objection, however, is to the laws themselves. They are property laws and, even when administered scrupulously, must be partial in their effects. In the same way an international system of arbitration could only, as the height of its achievement, maintain the *status quo*, and in that case the last state might well be worse than the first.

Apart from this, the whole policy of the statement, if it is to be effective, involves the surrender of national sovereignty, of the right of a nation in the last resort to decide its own destiny. And that surrender finds expression not merely in the decision to submit disputes to arbitration, but in the recognition that arbitration must be backed by some form of compulsion. That compulsion is embodied in the idea of an international police force. It is, surely, the wildest of idealistic dreams to imagine that capitalist states, whose creed is aggressive nationalism, would ever voluntarily and conscientiously surrender their sovereignty!

A Socialist foreign policy must be a class policy whose aim is, in every circumstance, to protect and further the interests of the workers in this and other countries, for Socialists believe that in the unity of interest between the workers throughout the world lies the future hope of peace. Those interests are threatened *now* by the growing danger of war, by the intensification of nationalism. To meet that situation the workers must be organised at once on the basis that they will not fight under *any* circumstances for a non-Socialist Government, not for pacifist reasons but because they refuse to identify themselves with nationalist war, which brings suffering to them, delays their emancipation and is never waged in their interests. Socialists cannot think in terms of national units. They could only call on the workers to sacrifice their lives in class-defence.

The statement argues further as though the general strike could only be used if the workers of the attacking nation co-operated with the workers in the attacked and, therefore, it rejects this weapon as impracticable now that Fascist governments have suppressed Trade Unionism over wide areas in Europe. The Hastings resolution, however, regarded the calling of a general strike as a policy which could if necessary be applied in this country alone—and there are, indubitably, several reasons why such a policy should be applied here without waiting for international action.

In the first place, the threat to use the general strike on the issue of peace or war is bound to have a deterrent effect on the Government. Again, the workers' interests will in the long run suffer more if they go into the war than if they stay out of it. Finally—and this is the most important reason—a general strike of 100 per cent. efficiency, organised to succeed, does in fact constitute the overthrow of the existing Government. The leaders of the successful strike become the *de facto* Government, for the general strike cannot remain merely a negative weapon. This fact was in the minds of those who sponsored the Hastings resolution. It is, no doubt, the unwritten reason why the authors of the Joint Statement will have nothing to do with the general strike.

The Labour Movement must, however, make it clear that the motive behind its refusal to fight is a class motive and not a pacifist one. Inevitably, its determined policy of war resistance will rally to it support from purely pacifist quarters, from those who put peace above party. Such support can be useful to the Movement in helping it to frighten the Government into a pacific attitude, even to overthrow it. The danger is real, however, that this *ad hoc* element might influence the foreign policy a Socialist Government should adopt. That policy must be realist. In Opposition the Movement is pacific; given a Socialist Government it becomes militant in defence of the workers, and must continue to be militant, in the sense that Russia is militant, until there is a classless society in every important country in the world.

It is admitted by all parties in this country that Russia is an influence for peace in the world to-day. Within her own borders lie the markets which she is working to expand, and she needs peace for the development of her industries. The will to peace is more apparent in her opportunist policy than in all the lip-service of capitalist Governments to the principle of collective security. A Socialist Government in power in Great Britain could, by close co-operation with Russia in both political and economic matters, by pacts of non-aggression with other countries, by the state regulation of foreign trade, by the very tone and training of its Red Army, make clear to the world its will to peace also.

This does not mean that the Labour Party, in opposition or in power, should advocate this country's withdrawal from the League of Nations. Our argument against the League is that capitalist Governments, by their very nature, cannot sufficiently subordinate their national rights to organise collective security. But the League can be used to produce useful, incidental reforms. Reduction in armaments is a good in itself and, after all, some decrease in total quantities might be achieved so long as the due proportions were retained.

Again, the League is invaluable to all governments as a channel of communication and a medium of publicity. As long as the League centralises information and broadcasts the opinions of statesmen, it is justifying its existence. A Socialist Government could use it as a powerful sounding board from which Socialist propaganda would go ringing through the world.

Further than that Socialists dare not commit themselves. Article 16 is a broken reed, and those who first relied on it should have been cured by the immunity of Japan in her recent " act of war." The admission of Russia into the League, which now seems probable, should not be taken as indicating either a change of policy in

Russia or a change of heart in Sir John Simon. Russia relies, and always has relied, on regional pacts for her security. She knows full well that the automatic operation of Article 16 is out of the question, and in entering the League she is merely facilitating the regional pacts to which she has assented for her own good reasons. The growing strength of her military and economic position is forcing the Tory Die-hards to welcome her as an ally.

Blind reliance on the League of Nations will not remove the causes of war. It certainly does not provide a solution for the dangers which threaten to-day. It will not be enough, when the clash comes, for Labour leaders to shrug their shoulders and say : " We tried to prevent this war." They can see it threatening now. Their job is to give the workers a lead in a policy which can be applied *now*. The youth of the Movement, whatever the leaders do, will resist another war in its own fashion. That resistance will be disastrous unless it is organised and organised at once.

B. A. BETTS

[This letter is referred to in our editorial comments this week. Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

# Correspondence

## FASCISM AND COMMUNISM

SIR,—Mr. Strachey's simple questions are as simply answered. He won't appreciate my point of view ; but no one engrossed in a battle sees it as an onlooker does.

I am opposed to extremism, whatever its colour. If " the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of London " are, as I hope, opposed to Fascism, they can best express their contempt by ignoring Fascist demonstrations, leaving the facetious hooligan and his sallies to provide an afternoon's amusement for curious idlers. The Fascists themselves on Sunday demonstrated their inability to stage " a large and impressive demonstration." They also demonstrated that they could *not* " visibly mobilise thousands of supporters " ; but I fully agree that the accession of such thousands to their ranks would greatly strengthen them. Mr. Strachey may be a professor of psychology, but he had better go to school again if he thinks that waves of anti-Fascist extremists drowning a handful of Fascists would engulf non-partisans also ; though I grant him that a mob might *temporarily* be swept off its feet. The same mob would cheer for war to-day and bewail it to-morrow.

I cannot speak for Mr. Strachey's " governing class," whatever that may be, but I am convinced that the average man is increasingly bored with the extremists of both wings and their " attacks " and " counter-attacks." He is also wondering how much longer he must pay to keep the peace between them. And since the first act of either side when in power would be to proscribe free speech, he may further be thinking that liberty can best be maintained by applying restrictions and a wholesome measure of discipline to both sides impartially.

But perhaps a foreigner has an even better view of the field than an English onlooker. It is reported that Mr Will Rogers, the American film comedian, has cabled for the benefit of the American press :

> The Blackshirts were holding their meeting. Two hundred yards away the Communists were holding theirs, and in between was all of London laughing at both of them. . . . These English have certainly solved the talking problem.

10 Warwick Court, W.C.1. F. CARPENTER

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SIR,—In your issue of September 8th you devote approximately three columns to a discourse on the Hyde Park Blackshirt rally, from which it is very difficult to ascertain exactly what is your attitude to the nature of the opposition which the Fascist movement was obliged to face. Now that the rally is over and the worst fears have been happily discredited, it may be opportune to discuss your own attitude in an atmosphere of sanity and comparative objectivity.

From the tone of your editorial, one is led to conclude that your hesitancy either to endorse or to condemn the attitude of the Communist " United Front " is engendered by the unnatural combination of your passionate hatred of Fascism and your customary Liberal timidity. It is unfortunate that this vagueness is not confined to the problem of making decisions. It has crept into your " facts," which consequently suffer by inaccuracy. Here are some of your less subtle inaccuracies :

" Few people had any doubt about the rights and wrongs . . . at Olympia." It had seemed to those of us who read diligently the press comments upon this meeting that there was, and still is, considerable doubt as to who was " in the right." Now that most of the hysterical tumult has died down, the balance of public opinion seems to be in favour of what you describe as " the deliberate and organised violence of the Blackshirts." The question of the justification of the force which was used there has been widely discussed already, and there is perhaps no good to come from reopening the discussion in order to refute your intransigent allegation.

Referring to the " background of the dispute " you say : " Let us state this background as impartially as we can." Immediately following this is an endeavour to place the responsibility for provocation upon the black shirts worn by Fascists. That is, of course, as reasonable as suggesting that the blue tunics of the Metropolitan Police should be banned in order not to offend the susceptibilities of criminals and militant Communists. It says little for your ability to attain to that impartiality at which you aim.

You say later : " It is clear . . . that there is no lack of money behind this organisation." That is merely a trimming of the Communist-fostered fiction that Fascism represents the militant force of " high finance," in its " determination to suppress working-class organisations." In reality, the Fascist movement in Britain is by no means wealthy, as any observant, intelligent man can see for himself. Absurd stories as to the origin of Fascist finances, with particular reference to certain well-known men and women, have all been exploded. It is scarcely wise of you to try to revive those absurdities.

We can agree with you that certain Communist slogans and rallying-cries " sound uncommonly like incitements to violence." At the same time we can safely challenge you to find their parallel anywhere in Fascist writings. Veiled references to Fascists' provocative behaviour require evidence in support of your allegations, at least as a guarantee of good faith. Similarly, your half-hearted condemnation of the actions of the police and magistrates demands substantial backing if it is to be seriously considered by decent English men and women.

You explain the strength of Fascism by a mention of " young men and women, ignorant of economics." Serious students of economics are few and far between. Intelligent ones are fewer. Fascism has its fair share, and any attempt to deny the existence of intelligent thought in the Fascist ranks is merely a clumsy but dishonest political tactic.

Finally, in your appeal to intelligent people to stimulate the discussion of Fascist and non-Fascist doctrines in the provincial press there is nothing to which one might object. Whether or not such letters as you mention materially affect public opinion is debatable. One cannot but feel that they have little effect upon the march of history.

John Strachey's letter in the same issue of your paper scarcely needs comment. As one of the instigators of the anti-Fascist rally he must bear a large share of the responsibility for calling out thousands of the Metropolitan Police. Here it is timely to express to them our admiration of their handling of a vast crowd, and our appreciation of the efficiency with which they dealt with a difficult situation.

G. E. DE BURGH WILMOT

Fascist Headquarters : For the British Union of Fascists
King's Road,
Sloane Square, S.W.3.

## GERMANY AND THE "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION"

SIR,—Until recently I was of the vague opinion that the Nazis had no grave objection to foreigners introducing their banned journals into Germany, so long as they kept their papers strictly to themselves. I had drawn this conclusion as friends in Germany had never failed to receive any of the various anti-Nazi papers which I had from time to time sent them.

An experience on the Dutch-German frontier, which I had a short time ago, proved my idea to be incorrect. Whilst in the train approaching the German frontier an affable German customs official appeared in my compartment to find me alone with my luggage and five issues of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. Smiling pleasantly throughout, the man consulted a note-book, apologised, gathered up my papers and vanished. I thought no more of the matter until we stopped at the frontier, when the same man appeared again and asked me to follow him.

In a small house a little way from the station I was confronted by three more officials examining the papers. Matters would have been cleared up sooner had I known more German. In the circumstances I was able to explain that I was a student by producing my passport, which was promptly confiscated; I could also look amazed when informed that what I had done was forbidden. What was much more difficult, however, was explaining that the editions were consecutive. I assumed that they were under the impression that they were all similar issues, and that I was a political agitator. So I lined up my papers and for fully one minute directed four pairs of eyes again and again to five different date headings. When this truth had dawned upon them I was allowed to return to the station just in time to catch the train—accompanied by two officials.

During the next half-hour, whilst we sped on into Germany, a most thorough examination of all my possessions was carried out; my examiners were only satisfied when a final upheaval of the carriage seats revealed empty nooks and dust. My passport was returned; I was informed that had I not been a student I should by now have been travelling in the opposite direction, and they were gone. Michael D. McCready

Christ Church, Oxford.

## MILK FOR CHILDREN

Sir,—There appeared last week in the public press a circular addressed by the Board of Education to local education authorities on the subject of milk for school-children. Next month the schools are to have a cheap supply, that is to say, the charge is to be ½*d.* instead of 1*d.* for the third of a pint which is considered the proper daily ration for a child at school. The Board rightly contemplates that, even at this price, some parents will be unable through poverty to pay for the milk and, if the children are to have it, the authority must pay. It seems almost incredible that the Board is still insisting (in this circular) that, before the authority can pay 2½*d.* a week for milk for a child whose parents are too poor to pay for it, the child must be examined by the School Medical Officer and be certified by him as suffering from "subnormal nutrition." It is well known that many education authorities grant free meals to school-children on an income basis only; does the Board of Education regard milk as a medicine that it—unlike food—is only to be given free where this subnormal condition is present?

The Board is rejecting the simple plan of making this cheap milk available without cost to children from the poorest homes, though it is obvious that, when there is so little money available for food at home, milk is essential for the proper development of the growing child. It must also be remembered that, by the time this "subnormal nutrition" becomes apparent in a child, irreparable damage may already have been done. From many quarters there is a demand that milk should be free to all children in primary schools, but there was perhaps not much hope that this would be granted; free milk to all necessitous children is surely not too much to ask for. Clara D. Rackham

Cambridge.

## CORONERS

Sir,—Doctors who have any experience of Coroners' Courts will endorse "Solicitor's" argument for their abolition. Responsibility rests with the practitioner to report to the Coroner deaths which he does not consider ascribable to "natural causes." It would be common sense to interpret this elastic term as only including deaths which the practitioner considered to need an official inquiry; but his hand is in fact forced by an unwritten set of rules made partly by the Registrar-General, partly by the Coroner himself, and should he issue a certificate covering a "cause" included in this category, the Coroner, advertised of the fact by the local Registrar, will order an inquest despite the certificate.

The list of causes under these rules is large. Possible suicides, murders and grave accidents apart, they include the most trivial accidents occurring in the course of a last illness, or precipitating it, all deaths following "collapse" in a public place, which may include death from known heart disease, death following a fit in a known epileptic, or merely a fatal illness following a stumble by a very old person. An inquest under these circumstances may be held or omitted according to the state of business at the Coroner's Office, and the more trivial accidents are noticeably more frequently reckoned sufficient cause for an inquest in the cities where the Coroner is usually a whole-time officer. The office is, in some sort, a vested interest not only for the Coroner himself but for his "officer," whose appointment is something of a sinecure, and even for the consulting experts called in to give evidence of autopsies, the importance of the office being increased by a large "turnover."

Among doctors the pronouncements of Coroners are a source of constant amusement, since complete ignorance is often displayed of the facts of medicine and pathology; thus, in a recent case, a Coroner was reported as stating that the poisonous dose of chloral hydrate, a sedative in common use, was 20 grains, this being the safe dose recommended by the British Pharmacopeia.

Proceedings are rarely businesslike. The Coroner is usually either irritably officious or "fatherly." His own view of a case has been arrived at before evidence is given in public, on the basis of the police report, and evidence in court which tends to upset this view is frequently heavily discounted by the Coroner's comments.

Misdirection of juries is common; thus, in a recent case, an accident which was obviously an incident in a fatal illness was rightly recorded by the jury as merely a contributory cause, but their verdict was thrice rejected (quite improperly) by the Coroner, until death was attributed solely to the accident.

One can safely say that in nine inquests out of ten the proceedings are merely farcical to the onlooker, distressing to the relatives of the dead person, and serve no useful legal or social purpose whatever. Duncan Leys

123 Bournville Lane,
Bournville, Birmingham.

## THE INDIAN PRINCE

Sir,—I have just read the article "The Indian Prince," in your issue of September 1st, and hope you will let me state some facts of my own experience.

From December, 1903, to July, 1904, I was acting as guardian and tutor to an Indian Maharajah in the capital of his State. The Maharajah was then a little boy thirteen years old. I was an English servant of his State. I did not have "official precedence before all Indian officials in the State, however high their rank." In fact I was not a "Durbari" at all and had no seat in Durbar. As I was interested in the State Functions I was always most courteously given a chair just outside the door of the Durbar Hall so that I could have a full view of each Durbar at which my charge presided. In this connection, before making any comments, it is necessary to examine the Treaty of each State in India with regard to the conditions applying to the employment by each State of Europeans and Americans.

From July, 1904, to November, 1904, I was an Assistant Master at the Mayo College, Ajmere; from November, 1904, to July, 1906, Vice-Principal of the Rajkumar College, Rajkot; from July, 1906, to December, 1926, Principal of the Daly College, Indore—all three "Chiefs' Colleges."

At those Colleges during the periods mentioned there were no Boy Scouts and no boy "had to keep a daily diary for which marks were awarded." Certainly on one occasion an Inspector in his report on the Daly College praised my Boy Scouts. Apparently he got his notes on different schools mixed as there were no Boy Scouts at the Daly College.

"Military drill was compulsory for all." At the times and in the places I have mentioned there was undoubtedly physical training on ponies and on foot for the boys. This naturally included teaching numbers of boys to move together in an orderly manner whether mounted or not. Such teaching can hardly be called "military drill." In 1905 sixteen boys of the Rajkumar College, Rajkot, were trained—and were delighted to be trained—to ride in the Escort of Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, when they visited India. These boys rode, armed and in uniform, in the Royal Escort next the Bodyguard on two occasions. They rode alone without any Indian or English Officer in charge of them.

"Standard and character of the instruction received." In my experience the classes of Chiefs' Colleges were graded so that the boys of the highest class were fit to appear for the Diploma Examination of Chiefs' Colleges or for the Matriculation Examination of an Indian University. These two examinations were of much the same standard. As I did not worship the examination god I did not send up many boys for these examinations, but of those sent from the Daly College during twenty years only one failed. Boys who were to be Ruling Chiefs generally went from the Daly College to large States or to British Indian Districts to be trained in administration. Cadets might go to Forest Schools or Police Training Schools in British India or be trained for administrative posts in large States or in British Indian Districts.

An attempt was made to avoid putting round pegs into square holes. There were plenty of failures.

As to boys being sent to Chiefs' Colleges by official pressure the following statement may be of interest. When I left the Daly College in 1926, exactly fifty per cent. of the boys were sons or grandsons of old pupils or had been sent direct, without any official pressure, by old pupils. When there is this feeling towards a school among its old boys I leave it to others to judge whether or not it is likely that the remaining fifty per cent. had all been sent by official pressure.

I enter into no controversy as to whether or not Chiefs' Colleges produce good, bad or indifferent results but merely state the facts of my own experience in certain places from 1903 to 1926 for comparison with some statements in the article of September 1st.

21 Northmoor Road, Oxford. PERCY HIDE

### THE STEEL TRAP

SIR,—I have been asked to make known that the University of London Animal Welfare Society's Bill, for the abolition of the cruel steel trap, will be introduced by Viscount Tredegar in the House of Lords early next session. In West Wales cattle have often been found with steel traps on their lips, picked up whilst grazing, and sometimes on their tongues, which have had to be amputated.

Many more people are now using long nets for catching rabbits. This is not surprising, as an eighty yards net can be bought for about the same price as a dozen traps; and rabbits caught in this humane and expeditious way fetch better prices in the market, as their legs are not mutilated. I am issuing an illustrated leaflet with full instructions for new ways of using long nets for rabbits under varying conditions, and for humane trapping of other animals, such as rats and moles.

National Fur Week begins on September 24th. I hope that people will choose furs that are named on the Fur Crusade White List, which are free from any taint of the steel trap and may therefore be worn with a clear conscience. Every time a trapped fur is bought another animal is condemned to a similarly cruel death to replace it. There is also a grave risk of dermatitis from wearing certain furs, which, I understand, does not apply to farmed ones.

White Lists and Humane Trapping leaflets are available for distribution free of charge; and I hope that people will help in abolishing the greatest mass martyrdom in the world to-day.

Wappenham, C. VAN DER BYL (Major)
Towcester, The Fur Crusade and Humane
Northants. Trapping Campaign

### IN CONCENTRATION CAMP

SIR,—Carl von Ossietzky, the former editor of the *Weltbühne* has been imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp for the past seventeen months. The ill-treatment he has received and his consequent breakdown are too well known to need recounting. Ossietzky was considered by many the finest journalist in Germany, and was one of the bravest pacifists in Europe. He has been proposed for this year's Nobel Peace Prize by associations of writers in France, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Norway.

In view of the great services that Ossietzky has rendered to the cause of peace, both by his writings and his personal example, this club has unanimously passed the following resolution:

> The Young P.E.N. Section of the London P.E.N. Club, joins with other writers' associations in France, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Norway in proposing Carl von Ossietzky, former editor of the *Weltbühne*, for this year's award of the Nobel Prize.

We, the undersigned officers of the Young P.E.N. ask you to find room for this announcement in your correspondence columns.

The Young P.E.N. ERNEST RAYMOND, President
28 Museum St., W.C.1. ALEXANDER HENDERSON, Chairman
ERIK WARMAN, Secretary

[We regret to notice that there is disquieting news about Dr. Neubauer, whose release with that of Ernst Reuter was promised on August 22nd. Ernst Reuter has been released, but no assurance of Dr. Neubauer's release or safety has been received, though funds have been sent by the Society of Friends for his journey from the Esterwegen concentration camp—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

# Miscellany

## ROGER FRY AS A CRITIC

THE part played by creators and critics respectively in movements, whether of literature or the visual arts, is never easy to determine. Practice precedes criticism, but artists are often hardly aware of the direction in which they are moving, let alone of the aesthetic implications latent in their preferences. They see things, they feel things, they record things thus and thus—and leave it at that. It has even happened that some of them have been content to regard as their caprices what proved the lasting elements in their achievement; but more often their own work has seemed to them so inevitable an outcome of what they admired in their famous predecessors that they have stood amazed at contemporaries finding anything new, difficult, or strange in their own work. But if there happens to be a real critic among those contemporaries this situation is changed: the artist becomes more conscious of direction and, alas, his imitators even too aware of it, so that they follow him with their heads and not their whole being, pushing to logical extremes implications which the critic has revealed in the work of their master. The "movement" is now thoroughly on foot, carrying along with it, inevitably, and keeping afloat for a while much rubbish destined to sink. Each period is dominated by preferences, deep, vital, but only dimly recognised, and Art, in the comprehensive sense, expresses these dominant ways of feeling, these indistinct responses of many, in a manner far more animated and emphatic it is true but not a whit more explicit to the intellect. It is criticism that takes the responsibility of translating these responses into language, clearly and accurately. To do this adequately requires a cluster of qualities seldom combined: sincerity in self-observation, intensity of feeling, the gift of intellectual analysis, wide aesthetic experience and enthusiastic curiosity.

Roger Fry possessed them in a rare degree, and since his death I have been trying to think if there was any other English critic who has stood in so clarifying and stimulating a relation to contemporary art and yet possessed such wide experience of the art of other ages: I have found no one to set beside him. He has influenced profoundly our approach to the visual arts, and contributed more than any other critic to the formation of a vocabulary by which attention can be directed to different aspects of aesthetic experience. That this language can be abused and employed chiefly to distinguish the critic's own impressions from the amateur's is true, but one of the marks of his own criticism is its freedom from all empty phraseology. His intellectual integrity matched the genuineness of his sensibility. There is no trace of "bugbear" verbiage in his writings; though they are not always easy to follow he is always trying to say something definite. In reading him you never feel that you are being taken in by sleight of pen, or that he is trying to intimidate you into agreement. He writes like one exploring himself, confident certainly in his analysis and conclusions, but fully aware of the precarious foundations on which aesthetic judgments rest. He has given us fresh eyes to see with. It is chiefly due to him that in England to-day artists such as Cézanne and Matisse are enjoyed. The comparative estimation in which not only they but others whom he has praised will be held in times to come must inevitably change; but when posterity wishes to discover, as it is sure to do, what were qualities which led our age to estimate those artists so highly, and the nature of the approach to art which underlay modern movements, if they turn to his writings they will, whether they agree or not with his estimates, at any rate understand. No critic was ever more aware of the angle from which he was judging what was before him, or more candid in communicating that attitude to his readers. In all his criticisms, whether they dealt with an ephemeral exhibition or the work of an old master, there was visible an endeavour to isolate the aesthetic impression, to disentangle that from the complex of emotions which any particular work of art might arouse in him, in others. That there was such a thing as a purely aesthetic response, and the reward of discovering it and of fixing attention on it, inestimable, was the fundamental postulate of his criticism. He firmly believed this. But he was too much of a philosopher, too much of an intellectual, not to know that it was in part an act of faith. What he kept trying to do was to make us analyse our experiences, in order to discard from them what was irrelevant to this peculiar thrill, this separate joy in contemplation, though the irrelevant might be in itself delightful. About the degree to which the content of a picture for the imagination, the meanings of a poem or a statue or a drawing, might enter into this peculiar experience, or heighten it in an ancillary way, he seems to have held different views at different times. It would be most interesting to trace the curve of his opinion on this vital matter in his works. My own impression is that latterly he was inclined to attribute more importance to imaginative content. But at whatever stage one happens to read him the great benefit one derives is the same: we are forced to inquire into the sources of our pleasure, the nature of our interest in a particular work of art. Does it spring from what is visible or from what is suggested, from the eye or from the imagination? If from what is presented to the eye alone, can we trace the means by which the miracle of pleasure is effected? Or if there is a hitch in the communication of that delight, to what part of the work then is that hitch due?

If you turn, for example, to his essay on "Some Questions in Aesthetics" (*Transformations*, Chatto and Windus), to the page on which he examines Daumier's drawing of the Gare St. Lazare, you will find him analysing this drawing from two points of view. First the impression derived from the arrangement of light and shadow, the imposing effect of the great square supports of the arcade, the striking silhouettes of the figures, the suggestion of wide aerial spaces; in short, the feelings aroused by the relation of objects in space presented by the picture. Next, he turns to an admirable and amusing analysis of the figures depicted, to the human and psychological value of the picture, adding: "All this time we have been entirely forgetting plastic and spatial values. We have, through vision, plunged into that spaceless, moral world which belongs characteristically to the novel, and we can hardly help noticing, by the way, how distinct this state of mind is from that with which we began." Lastly, he examines the relation between the two, noting where Daumier's desire to bring out a dramatic incident has led to failure in plastic design, and when that design has absorbed the psychological content successfully. Now this method of criticism is really illuminating. Our attention is drawn to our change of attitude towards the picture, and how hard it is to relate plastic with psychological appreciation or "to find any marked co-operation between the two experiences." In the same way he goes on to examine pictures by Poussin, Rembrandt, Picasso, Courbet, Corot, and others. We are continually compelled to examine the nature of our responses and ask ourselves which elements in them are aesthetic. It was this power of forcing us to attend to different impressions one by one and decide which of them were valuable that made Roger Fry the best of lecturers. His lectures were experiments previously carried out on himself and repeated again in public. Picture after picture was thrown on the screen and the audience was asked to watch their responses. He was a man with a scientific training and he believed in experiment. Only by investigation into what we actually feel in front of a work of art could light be thrown on the nature of a work of art.

I have written of his work chiefly in relation to modern art, but that only concerned a part of his writings. What proved his integrity, which was unaffected by prestige, was that his attitude towards the living artist and the famous dead was the same. How he conceived of his function as a critic may be read in the opening passage of his essay on Fra Bartolomao:

> Baudelaire compared the great names in art to lighthouses posted along the tracks of historic time. The simile, as he used it, seizes the imagination and represents a great truth, but it allows of an interpretation which the limits of a sonnet form forbade him to develop. He takes the lights of his beacons as much for granted as the sailor does the lights of real lighthouses. But the lighthouses of art do not burn with so fixed and unvarying a lustre. The light they give is always changing insensibly with each generation, now brighter, now dimmer, and often enough growing bright once more. But we sometimes forget that the lights have to be tended or they grow faint and may expire altogether. For them to burn brightly they must be fed by the devotion of some few spirits in each generation. If that fails for a long period they go out and become one of those dead, ineffectual names which still linger on, obstructions rather than aids to the historical voyager.

I have spoken only of his work. This is not one of those memorial articles which the public look for when a remarkable man dies; but Roger Fry only died three days ago. I need a little longer to collect myself and to sift my memories of a friend known so long and so well. Next week nothing will give me more pleasure than to share some of them with readers of this paper, for which he sometimes wrote.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

# THE MOSCOW THEATRE FESTIVAL

THE second annual Theatre Festival has now finished in Moscow, and the two or three hundred visitors from every European and American country are doing their best to sort out their impressions from its bewildering variety.

First: as to the faults in the programme. Though the Festival was theatrical rather than musical, several operas were included, and *as* operas were included there seems no valid reason why *Lady Macbeth of Minsk*, a recent work by a young Soviet composer, Shastakovitch, should have not been made available. According to those who have heard it, it is a work of extreme power and originality—the best thing that Soviet art has achieved so far. Pleasant as it was to listen to *Ivan the Terrible*, *Prince Igor* and Tchaikovsky in one of the centres of the world's art, the Great Opera in Moscow, *Lady Macbeth* should obviously have been given a place on one of the ten nights. The fact that it was given two days later in Leningrad was only an aggravation, as most people could not wait for it.

Again, a Tchehov play should have been included. For most English and American people intelligently interested in the theatre Tchehov stands as the summit of modern dramatic art; and the chance to see him played in his own theatre—the First Moscow Art Theatre, that still carries symbolically a little white seagull at the base of its dark curtain, would have been appreciated. It again helped matters not at all that *The Cherry Orchard* was in the bill on the 13th, three days after the Festival ended, and that only very few of us were lucky enough to be able to wait for it. The company of the First Moscow Art Theatre is the finest company of naturalistic actors in the world. I saw them first a couple of years ago. Having heard of their prodigious reputation, I went to the theatre with scepticism, feeling that "perhaps they were not so good after all." I was wrong about this. As their theatre is always full they can rehearse a new play for as long as they like, taking six months about it, or longer if it so pleases them. Their current repertory brings them full houses, and they need introduce a new play only when it is ready, and not before. An important London producer recently told me that he thought that "if a company could not do a play in four weeks rehearsal, they could not do it at all." He did not know what the Tchehov-Stanislavsky tradition could mean. Six months rehearsal can mean that every small part in a crowded scene can be rehearsed and re-rehearsed up to a point when it becomes a small masterpiece of character-acting—yes, and then be "orchestrated," as a conductor conducts an orchestra, back again into its true dimensions, claiming only its right share of the audiences' attention and no more. I wish to offend no one in the London theatre world when I say that, after such scenes as the Court-scene in Tolstoy's *Resurrection* at the First Moscow Art Theatre, much that passes for West End production in London seems as reckless as amateur theatricals.

Apart from there being no Tchehov and no *Lady Macbeth of Minsk*, the programme was very faithfully representative of the last few years of Soviet dramatic art. By this is meant the plays that Soviet audiences see, which are not by any means only the ones written since the Revolution. The classics figure very largely. Classic operas and ballets take up much more than half the repertory of the Great Opera in Moscow. Plays and operas by Borodin, Rossini, Shakespeare (in a comparatively unadulterated version), Dumas *fils*, Ostrovsky, Schiller and Tolstoy were all being played regularly in the repertory of Moscow theatres during the time of the Festival. There were three post-Revolution plays, *Intervention* at the Vakhtangov, *Liubov Yarovaya* at the Maly, and *The Optimistic Tragedy* at the Kamerny, all propagandist, up to a point, and all dealing with the period of the terrific war which begun after our own war had ended, the civil and counter-Revolutionary war which dragged on in Russia from 1918 to 1922. All these three plays are propagandist in the sense that their heroes and heroines are Communists; and that the great triumph rather than the million small tragedies of the Revolution are their theme. This was to be expected. What was very interesting indeed was to find that another play *In the Days of the Turbin Family* (or, as we have translated it in English, *The White Guard*), a play sympathetic to White officers and counter-revolutionaries, was still running after many hundred performances, and occupying an honoured place in the repertory of the First Moscow Art Theatre. This suggests that the censorship in Moscow is by no means as rigid as many people in England would like to imagine. *Intervention*, a good melodrama of its kind, was very inventively and intelligently staged.

Among other plays to be seen was *Twelfth Night* at the Second Moscow Art Theatre. Its setting, of slender gold pillars against a Renaissance background, was extremely lovely, and some of the parts were well played. I quarrel with the production for having thrown overboard Shakespeare's delicately balanced structure of the play—romantic scene alternating with comic scene—and having lumped almost all the comedy scenes together in the middle of the play into an hour and a half's riotous knock-about. It is only fair to add that the Russian audience enjoyed it enormously.

Lastly, the Children's Theatre, a prototype of a hundred other Children's Theatres, State-subsidised throughout the Soviet Union. An article—and more than an article—could be written on it. With a bare minimum of propaganda (about two minutes to the hour), its shows have a graciousness, a gaiety, and a sensitive awareness of the child-mind that make them among the most exciting performances now being given in Russia. Natalie Satz, the young woman who is its director, is doing a great work.

And one's conclusions? Chiefly that of infinite life, centred in and around the theatre. "Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls," to quote Andrea del Sarto. For "French" read Russian. Everything in the theatre seems to be a novelty to every Russian, from the minute naturalism of the Stanislavsky tradition to the wildest experiments of Meyerhold's formalism. Do you know how one gets seats in a Moscow theatre (quite apart from the gala period of the Festival)? Every ten days a list is published of the attractions of the next ten days. One queues up at the theatre on that day—for to delay would mean losing one's chance of a seat—and as each performance is sold out of all its seats, a little blue cross is put against the name of the play in the play-bill. For four consecutive years I have been to Russia, and I have never seen a vacant seat at any Moscow theatre. HUBERT GRIFFITH

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### "The Shining Hour," at the St. James' Theatre

*The Shining Hour*, Mr. Keith Winter's new play at the St. James' Theatre, may be neither plausible nor realistic; but there is no doubt that it "acts" extremely well. The conventions of the stage predominate from first to last. In Scene One, a group of unusually metropolitan-looking Yorkshire farmers are heard discussing their brother's recently acquired part-foreign wife at the very tops of their voices just outside her bedroom door; and when the door opens and Miss Gladys Cooper steps forth and gazes down—in both senses—on her rustic relatives assembled below—Hannah, the sharp-tongued unmarried sister (brilliantly portrayed by Miss Marjorie Fielding), Mickey, a prepossessing but conceited young man, and David, the piano-loving horse-coper—the audience has a shrewd suspicion of the next developments. Mariella, of course, will upset the apple-cart. She does. . . . Hannah rages and sulks; Mickey attempts conquest; David moans over the keyboard, while Judy, his wife—Miss Adrianne Allen—looks on in pitiful acquiescence. She commits suicide that the lovers may "find happiness." This matrimonial sacrifice is accomplished at the height of a terrific thunderstorm which sets fire to a stable across the yard. Judy strides into the jaws of death; Mariella is ostracised by her family and husband; David is reduced to the verge of lunacy. Mariella rescues him. . . . Miss Cooper plays her part with the indomitable spirit of an experienced actress; Mr. Raymond Massey—David—extracts considerable pathos from his role, first as lover, then as disconsolate and remorseful widower; Miss Allen is charming and graceful as Judy. Her performance and the comic acerbity of Miss Marjorie Fielding do much to improve *The Shining Hour*.

### "Murder in Mayfair"

For a large part of an untidy first act at the Globe one speculated at leisure upon whom Mr. Novello had decided to make his murderee. Little of importance was happening on the stage, and there were a number of characters with some qualifications for an early and violent blotting-out. There was, for instance, Fania Sherry who sold furniture, in a parrot-house atmosphere, to assorted lovelies and beastlies of Mayfair; but Miss Zena Dare played so brilliantly and amusingly that Fania could ill be spared. Jacques Clavel (Mr. Novello), who, after an unfortunate love-affair ten years back, had given to the piano the care and attention which with better luck he might have been lavishing on Mary, now Lady Ventire, was so conventional a great musician that somebody might have attempted to destroy him from sheer wantonness. And then there was Mary herself, whose pompous posturings of renunciation needed all Miss Compton's charms for their disguise. Finally, and this was authentic, came the pale and hag-ridden Auriol Crannock, weary sensationalist, determined to destroy Jacques, body and soul, if she can possess him. Incredibly, Miss Edna Best contrives to subdue her natural cheerfulness to the tortured intensities of the part, and presents a marvellously unpleasant creature who is also a human being, the only one in the cast. A beer-and-sausage party in her mews flat is realistic enough to be almost intolerable, but Auriol concludes by rolling down a staircase with two bullets in her. Who did it and why need not be told, but Mary and Jacques, hand-in-hand, face a censorious world (apparently without a police force) at curtain fall. It is disconcerting to notice an audience's enthusiasm for this wearisome rubbish, but *Murder in Mayfair* looks like being committed nightly for a long time to come.

### "Rose and Glove" at the Westminster

The faster men travel forward the more passionately do they cast back, clutching at their dead forbears, as though to tear them out by the roots and compel them also onward. The Elizabethans fathered on to the most unlikely progenitors their hesitancies, their longing and their faith: we now must graft our despondencies, our death-urges, our numberless inhibitions on to such imperious stock as Christina of Sweden or Charles of England. Mr. Williamson's study of Piers Gaveston is in this great tradition; sympathetically and movingly interpreted by Mr. Emlyn Williams it is plausible enough, for although historically absurd, it is true to itself, and that, as Polonius and the Troll agreed, is enough. The sensitive, imaginative, adolescent Gaveston, forced to seem counsellor when he can only be friend, is a Shavian St. Francis, whose selfless love for the boy king leads him from romantic pacifism to heroic sacrifice. Margaret of Clare, his wife, grows from a thoughtful girl to a martyrdom greater even than that of Piers, and Miss Goodner's performance is entirely satisfying, whilst Miss Rorie as Isabella gives to the play its one note of real history. The first act drags; the attempted characterisation of the various Earls fails, and their inexplicable "naiceness" would discredit even the remoter suburbs. Edward I is ridiculous, and his son spiritless (he remains so throughout the play). But the scene at Wallingford succeeds in showing men and women following their natural avocations, and the third act carries the several movements unhurryingly to their logical conclusions. Mr. Hunt's staging is adequate, but his timing and grouping are a trifle metronomical.

### "Merrie England"

It is a bewildering evening at the Prince's for those who have no theatrical memories of the 1900's. Incredible, that people should still laugh at Basil Hood's heavy-footed humour, that the fustian simplicities of the plot should still pass muster in an audience which normally prefers its lunacy to be frankly labelled "musical comedy" and values above all its reputation for sophistication. In truth *Merrie England* is hardly worth the reviving, unless it may convince a few of the value of tune as well as rhythm in popular music. "What on earth can be the worth of a song that a man can't hum?" asked one of the comedians, and Sir Edward German's robust obviousness repeats the challenge. The piece is produced lavishly, in the convention which does not scruple to leave Queen Elizabeth contemplating the backs and profiles of the rustics who are supposed to be entertaining her, and sets the yeomen loping untidily about the stage at intervals. Miss Enid Cruikshank achieves dignity as the Queen despite a curious pair of eyebrows. Mr. Denis Hoey booms satisfyingly as Long Tom the forester, and Joseph Hislop sings Sir Walter Raleigh's songs mellifluously. Such acting as occurs belongs exclusively to Miss Rosalinde Fuller, whose putative witchcraft consists entirely of being human in a company of dummies.

### Housing Exhibition

One of the most interesting features of recent Housing Exhibitions at Olympia has been the stand of the "New Homes for Old," which has forced the casual visitor to realise the nature of slum conditions. At this year's Exhibition, which opened on Wednesday for a fortnight, a new group, Mars, has joined in with the "New Homes for Old" in providing the best stand of the whole show. "Mars"—the letters denote Modern Architectural Research—is the British branch of the International Congresses for Modern Architecture. Some energetic members of this branch have acquired a social conscience of a decided left tinge. Realising the urgent need for new housing and replanning in London, they have taken a small part of the central area, Bethnal Green, and studied it in detail. Since this borough lies away from the main arteries of traffic, they find it suitable as the beginning of an effort to obliterate the present tangled network of dingy streets of two-storied cottages and replacing them with well-designed and cheaply produced blocks of flats standing in their own grounds. Well-drawn maps, accompanied by photographs and diagrams, headed with arresting captions, catch one's attention. Facts about the overcrowding, ability to pay rents and even nutrition impress themselves on the mind. Survey work of this sort should be undertaken, not by private individuals but by London's Labour County Council, which ought also to learn the technique of arousing a passionate belief in reforms.

## THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, September 16th—
Gerald Heard on "Planning: Its Possibilities and Limitations," Conway Hall, 11.
London Socialist League. William Mellor on "Vital Issues Before the Labour Party," Transport House, Smith Square, 7.30.
MONDAY, September 17th—
"Antony and Cleopatra," Old Vic.
TUESDAY, September 18th—
Golf, £1,040 Professional Tournament, Walton Heath.
"No More Ladies," Wyndham's Theatre.
WEDNESDAY, September 19th—
Royal Horticultural Society's Fruit and Vegetable Show, Crystal Palace.
"Moonlight is Silver," Queen's Theatre.
THURSDAY, September 20th—
"Androcles and the Lion," and "Love is the Best Doctor," Winter Garden.

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# Current Literature

## BOOKS IN GENERAL

A GREAT man of action, a soldier, is a particularly difficult subject for a biographer since, besides drawing a portrait and revealing a character, it is necessary to describe actions and their effects upon other men and the course of history. These are commonly stirring and dramatic, and the man who can reduce them to their essentials and convey the movement of a battle is not always the best qualified to trace the psychological springs which have set it originally in motion. He is apt to consider men as solid, wooden and unchangeable as knights or pawns. The motives of soldiers are thus rarely inquired into though they are certainly no simpler than those of other people. The chief difference between two recent biographies, *Oliver Cromwell* by John Buchan (Hodder and Stoughton, £1 1*s*.) and *Cromwell* by Hilaire Belloc (Cassell, 12*s*. 6*d*.) is that the latter is far more concerned with psychological analysis and the motives of the man. Cromwell's character was peculiarly English: a mass of contradictions, a structure built up of innumerable facets. Mr. Belloc's greatest gift is that of simplification, but in this book his clarity of exposition is sometimes his greatest handicap. For example, he says categorically that:

> If there is one thing certain about the moral character of Cromwell it is that he was not ambitious. . . . He lived to be over forty-five without making any effort at fame or power; and no man ever develops the desire for them long after youth is past.

This is true and not true. Cromwell certainly had no personal vanity and cared nothing for fame or for the ostentation of power. But from his boyhood he had always been an intriguing ringleader—of village lads, of puritan lecturers, of commoners alarmed for their rights, of wildfowlers and basket-makers from the fens. He was repeatedly chosen for Parliament not merely because he came of the first family in Huntingdon but because he was always active about his neighbours' affairs. Such preoccupations involve ambitions and a desire for power. Cromwell only wished for power in order to carry out his ends; what else does any sane man desire? One cannot help feeling that Mr. Belloc is more interested in the ethics of Cromwell's actions than in the man himself: he is anxious to justify his admiration for this monstrous enemy of the Catholic religion. His book is thus a piece of moral white-washing and ends with the presumptuous question of what is likely to happen to this enemy of the Faith in the next world. Nevertheless, I think Mr. Belloc's is the best book on Cromwell which has appeared, as it certainly is the best written.

* * *

Mr. Buchan's book has not this brilliance; its merits and its faults are not clear-cut. It is a solid, careful, most thorough piece of work and though the picture which it gives of Cromwell is more conventional, it is less distorted than Mr. Belloc's, while it is respectably removed from the frothy hero-worship and inaccurate ravings of Carlyle. Perhaps a certain ugliness in Mr. Buchan's prose style betrays a lack of sensibility and delicacy of perception which is his chief limitation. Is it only pedantic and finicking to object to: *But Oliver whenever he appeared had been like the stoop of a peregrine*, or to: *The face of a man who knows with utter conviction his immediate purpose?* Utter, being connected with outer, rings unpleasantly against conviction, and I cannot help suspecting that there is similar impercipience in Mr. Buchan's dealings with human emotions which are more fragile and indefinable than words. Beginning with a most painstaking picture of the state of public opinion and of the politics of the first half of the seventeenth century, which contains a most admirable appreciation of Pym, he shows himself thoroughly at home in his account of the civil war, which is magnificently described in every detail. A rabbit warren, a field of rye on Marston Moor, these things are brought home vividly to us. Yet there are only four short references to Cromwell's mother; it is characteristic of Mr. Buchan that, failing in emphasis, what he does say is the truth.

> She had been one of the main formative influences in his life, and, while his wife confined herself to simple household matters, his mother had been his confidante and counsellor from the old simple days of Huntingdon and Ely up to the splendours of Whitehall. . . . Only one member (of his household circle) can be said to have really influenced him—his mother, whom, till she died at a great age, he visited every night before he went to bed. She had done much to form him, but she was a little awed at her own handiwork, and her pride in him was tempered by a constant anxiety about his safety.

Mr. Belloc scarcely mentions her, and it does not occur to either writer to ask himself such unanswerable yet illuminating questions as what part this proud and managing woman played when Royalty were staying at her brother-in-law's, or what were her relations with Laud when he was Archdeacon of Huntingdon.

* * *

Opinions, even the deepest ones which have been arrived at after the greatest agony and suffering, are so often adopted for unconscious reasons that it is difficult not to believe that the material circumstances of the Cromwell family are relevant to his psychological development. Yet this relevance is nowhere stressed or pointed out by Mr. Buchan. The circumstances are as follow: as a child Oliver had been free to run about Hinchinbrooke, then one of the greatest houses in England, where the most lavish hospitality had been dispensed for two generations and in which it was impossible that he should not have frequently seen James I and Henry, Prince of Wales, and where, if tradition be correct, he was the playfellow of Charles, who is known to have stayed there as a child. In those days he no doubt believed with good cause that his family were great people. But his uncle, Sir Oliver, poured out a great treasure to entertain the Stuarts without getting anything in return except his knighthood of the Bath, and after many years of extravagance was forced to sell Hinchinbrooke to the Montagus and retire to Ramsey. This forced sale came a few years after the death of Oliver's father when the young man, who had contracted what Mr. Buchan calls "some glandular affection which the body would outgrow" during what is supposed to have been a dissolute life in London, found himself forced to return to the country with his wife and carry on the business of a large farmer. It was in these circumstances that

> The teaching of his parents and his schoolmaster, the puritan background to his pleasant life of Cambridge, talks maybe with his cousin Hampden and Hampden's friends, the atmosphere of the age, stray words recollected from sermons, texts recollected from the Bible and his own fundamental gravity of mind had produced their fruit at last. Oliver had to face a grim communion with his soul.

Mr. Buchan fails to note that this grim struggle came when the cadet of an aristocratic house, who had hitherto enjoyed rugged health, believed himself to be dying, and for the first time saw himself in circumstances of something like poverty and forced into an employment too narrow for his talents. Had James I, or either of his sons, been attracted by the rough country boy and brought him to court, had the profuse Sir Oliver been given some lucrative office, who can doubt that Oliver's conversion would have taken another form? And what would have been the course of the Civil War had he been Prince Rupert's lieutenant? But James preferred Scottish lads, and Oliver was more healthily employed in playing cricket and football and roystering with the boys in the villages round Huntingdon and St. Ives. When the time came these bumpkin friendships served him in good stead. All his life Oliver had an intense family feeling; as Mr. Buchan points out he had twenty-one kinsmen or connections in the Long Parliament with Hampden at their head. His army was officered, and his administration staffed, by a host of cousins and connections by marriage and by the Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire men whom he had known from boyhood. But the complexities of Oliver's character are baffling: it is a thousand pities that Lytton Strachey was led away by the glamour of Elizabeth's unsatisfied passions. The practical mystic, the gentle, tender-hearted, ruthless butcher, the egalitarian aristocrat who remains a dark figure in spite of these excellent biographies was a character whom he, more than anyone, might have illuminated.

DAVID GARNETT

# NEW NOVELS

**A Handful of Dust.** By EVELYN WAUGH. *Chapman and Hall.* 7s. 6d.

**Tea-Tray in the Sky.** By GRAHAM SHEPARD. *Barker.* 8s. 6d.

**The Search.** By C. P. SNOW. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d.

**His Worship The Mayor.** By WALTER GREENWOOD. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

For some time—ever since the publication of *Black Mischief*—Mr. Evelyn Waugh's admirers have been asking themselves just how long he would be able to preserve the exquisite comic equilibrium that distinguished *Vile Bodies* and *Decline and Fall*. Solemnity showed signs of creeping in. . . . No one who has studied Mr. Waugh's novels with a close and sympathetic eye can have failed to recognise that he is at bottom a profoundly pensive—indeed, an extremely serious and, at moments, a melancholy and disenchanted—character; but though one did not grudge him the expression of what is, perhaps, after all, his real literary temperament, one could not help feeling that these intervals of solemnity, when the satirist gave way to the Catholic moralist, detracted from the charm of otherwise extravagant and light-hearted stories; in short, that his serious passages were out of tune. Thus, I looked forward with apprehension to his next novel. It is pleasant to record that any fears I may have harboured—fears somewhat intensified as I noticed the title and observed the quotation from Mr. T. S. Eliot that adorns the title-page—proved completely baseless; for *A Handful of Dust*, if not the most exhilarating, is certainly the most mature and the best written novel that Mr. Waugh has yet produced. Here tragedy and comedy are interdependent. It is true that the reader of *A Handful of Dust*, unlike the reader of *Decline and Fall*, no longer interrupts his reading to put down the book and laugh aloud. On the other hand, he is kept lightly, skilfully and continuously amused throughout the entire volume, and smiles and is subtly horrified at the same instant. In essence, the harrowing is often farcical; and there is a touch of tragedy in many comic situations.

The story told is equally painful and hilarious. Mr Waugh handles his *dramatis personae* with a masterly and dispassionate deftness; and only in one episode does there seem to be a slight softening of his attitude, a failure of that tone of acerbity which suits him so well. I am thinking of the passages which Mr. Waugh devotes to Tony Last's little son and his relationship with his nurse and parents and with the groom who teaches him to ride. Itself, the episode is not calculated to shock a sensitive and unsentimental reader; but, given the rest of the narrative, I feel that Mr. Waugh might have done better to harden his heart. Elsewhere, the beauty of his method is its complete heartlessness. Tony Last is a good creature, fond of his wife, of his little boy—presently killed in a hunting accident—and of Hetton, the large, hideous Victorian-Gothic mansion, which he spends his whole income to keep up, but so foolish as almost to deserve the cuckoldom with which his trust and affection are eventually requited. Brenda, his wife, is a charming sham. There was no particular reason why she should fall in love with John Beaver, a young man who passes his mornings by the telephone, hoping for the eleventh-hour invitation that sometimes materialises; and this very lack of motive makes her infatuation, as described—or implied—by Mr. Waugh, appear all the more plausible. To Brenda, her *cicisbeo* is "my Mr. Beaver," "poor Mr. Beaver"; and yet when the news is broken to her of the little boy's death she experiences an immense relief when she understands that it is her son—John Andrew—and not her lover—plain John—who has been killed:

> She sat down on a hard little Empire chair against the wall, perfectly still with her hands folded in her lap, like a small well-brought-up child introduced into a room full of grown-ups. She said, "Tell me what happened. Why do you know about it first?"
>
> "I've been down at Hetton since the week-end."
>
> "Hetton?"
>
> "Don't you remember? John was going hunting to-day."
>
> She frowned, not at once taking in what he was saying. "John . . . John Andrew . . . I . . . Oh thank God. . . ." Then she burst into tears.
>
> She wept helplessly, turning round in the chair and pressing her forehead against its gilt back.

The tragedy of their love affair was its utter emptiness; Mr. Waugh's treatment of this episode is all the more convincing because he tells us so little about the lovers and, except by implication, does not attempt to analyse the nature of "poor Mr. Beaver's" physical and emotional appeal. The love affair is scarcely a love affair in the genuine sense; Brenda and her paramour seem to be engaged in some absurd, rather destructive and vaguely improper game, egged on by the gossip of their acquaintances, stimulated—as far as Mr. Beaver is concerned—by the knowledge that such an affair adds immensely to his social prestige, and by Brenda's belief that she is recapturing her lost girlhood. Their friendship flickers out, as it was bound to do. . . . How odd, then, that the editor of a Catholic paper should charge the book with being "sedulously and diabolically cruel," "vile," "malodorous," and generally quite unfit for the bookshelves of a chaste and self-respecting Papist! Cruel *A Handful of Dust* certainly is; a more "moral" book—though Mr. Waugh is too intelligent a novelist to append any explicit moral message—has seldom come my way. I rise from Mr. Waugh's new novel as from a reading of one of the sterner and more uncompromising Fathers, convinced that human life is a chaos of inclinations and appetites, and that few appetites are strong enough to be worth gratifying. Strange to add, I am also amused and enlivened; but it is not the novelist's fault that he is a brilliantly diverting storyteller.

Mr. Waugh's narrative method is economical. His portraits—notably those of John Beaver and of his mother, the indefatigable Mrs. Beaver, who lives by the practice of that bizarre modern craft known as "interior decoration"—are dashed in with a few savage, affectionately feline strokes. Mr. Waugh does not waste his own, or the reader's, time. Alas, that Mr. Graham Shepard should apparently assume that his readers are prepared to put all the time in the world at his disposal, and should proceed to plunge them into a long, intricate story, of which every page needs pruning and many pages merit complete elimination. The epithet that his style suggests is *touffu*, dense, tufted, woolly, full of snarls and snags, rich in redundancies, interpersed with little irrelevant bits and odds and ends of cleverness. Something tells me that Mr. Shepard may write very good letters; there is no doubt that he is accomplished, but just at present his cleverness is of such a dithering and disconnected kind—expressed by rows of little dots, often a dozen or more to the average paragraph—that one loses patience after the second or third chapter. It is a pity; for Mr. Shepard has real gifts. He has a pleasant knack of finding the right word, of hitting off a scene in a single sentence; and yet he fails to arrange his sentences in a significant order. One day he may produce an extremely amusing book; but *Tea-Tray in the Sky* will never do.

Both Mr. Waugh and Mr. Graham Shepard deal with the life of the upper and upper-middle classes. Tony Last is not rich—at least, most of his income goes into keeping up an ugly and inconvenient house—but he is very far from being poor; while Maureen Pierreson, Mr. Shepard's whimsical and oh-so-sophisticated heroine, is the member of a prosperous and easy-going family who travel at home or abroad much as it pleases them. An air of leisure and elegance pervades the narrative. *The Search*, Dr. C. P. Snow's second novel, is a considerably sterner, bleaker and more earnest production—the story of a scientist, a well-known crystollographer, of his rise from indigence to eminence and of his decline from scientific eminence to hard-won matrimonial felicity. The book is matter-of-fact and straightforward. It is interesting, too, if only because Dr. Snow understands his subject, is able to write of scientific research from the inside, and makes no effort to scale emotional and literary heights beyond his immediate scope. Yet the impression it leaves behind is faintly antiquated. I mean that *The Search* belongs to the period of *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Tono Bungay* and *The New Machiavelli*, and that the "novel of ideas" is showing its age. Still, Dr. Snow writes honestly, freshly and simply, with a complete lack of any stylistic affectation.

*His Worship the Mayor* is a socialist pamphlet. Next to income-tax inspectors and other minor bureaucrats, I am prepared to believe that the municipal big-wigs of a northern industrial town are the most detestable and crassly unsympathetic tribe that crawl and pullulate upon the face of the earth; but I find it hard to imagine that their stupidity and vulgarity can be quite as inhuman, quite as oppressively concentrated, as that of Mr. Edgar Hargraves, who after much scheming, wriggling and bootlicking becomes Mayor of the Two Cities. Mr. Greenwood's subtitle—*It's Only Human Nature After All*—should have given him his cue; for human nature, at its best and worst, is variegated, eccentric, full of surprises; and among the commercial classes he prefers to see it as invariably villainous. Mr. Greenwood writes admirably when he is describing a slum, but less admirably when he crosses the threshold of a middle-class parlour. PETER QUENNELL

## SIR WALTER SCOTT'S LETTERS

**The Letters of Sir Walter Scott.** Edited by H. J. C. GRIERSON, LL.D. Vols. V (1817–1819) and VI (1819–1821). *Constable.* 18*s.* net per volume.

These volumes cover the high noon of Scott's achievement, which lasted from his forty-seventh to his fifty-first year. He had yet to reach the zenith of his fame and win international honours, but that is another matter. There is always apt to be a time-lag between plenitude of powers and plenitude of reputation, and in the case of Scott there is also the paradox that he gained his world-wide audience by means of work that represented a phase where genius was giving place to mere ingenuity. But the years from 1817 to 1821 saw the production of *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Pirate* and *The Fortunes of Nigel;* they saw the completion (or nearly) of Abbotsford; and they saw Walter Scott, Esq., transformed into Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, who, thus solaced, flung away his long-cherished ambition to be raised to the Bench, and reconciled himself to the Clerk's table.

As a rule, a creative writer's most fruitful years are also the best years of his correspondence, but with Scott it is not so. We see his correspondence expanding enormously in variety and volume, but not much in interest. As years and success went on his circle of acquaintance and friendship grew both among "the best people," whom he esteemed more than their wits warranted, and among a host of cranks and cadgers, towards whom he showed more than due patience. To the former his letters are courteous, genial or rollicking as the occasion and person may require. To the latter he is always civil, often kind, sometimes brief, but seldom curt. There are the usual Ballantyne letters with their hotchpotch of affection, remonstrance and admonition. Lastly, there are the family letters which are uniformly amiable, save when Lockhart has to be rebuked more in sorrow than in anger, or when Cornet Walter Scott, of the 18th Hussars, incurs Papa's downright anger by refusing to humbug about sorrow.

Scott's restrained displeasure with Lockhart was over the silly literary squabble between the latter and John Scott, editor of the *London Magazine*, which ended one night at Chalk Farm with John Scott's death by the reluctant hand of Lockhart's friend, Jonathan Christie. It has always been known that Lockhart cut a pretty shabby figure in the affair, and that Sir Walter was hard put to it to convince himself and the world that his son-in-law's conduct had been all that could be desired of a gentleman. Now we have for the first time the whole of Sir Walter's letters on the affair. They cannot be read without a blush. When the first news came, while John Scott was still languishing of his mortal wound, Sir Walter writes to Lockhart in terms of coarse exultation, calls the stricken man a coward, and adds: "I cannot bring myself to be sorry for him; even if the *worst* should happen there was more skaith at Sheriffmuir." When the *worst* did happen it sobered Sir Walter into his normal decency, though even then he could not help suggesting that it was perverse of John Scott to die: "The poor man's irritable disposition proved too much for Mr. Guthrie's skill," is his manner of announcing the sad event.

Shocking as it is, one must not attach too much importance to this revelation. On the contrary it is a relief to find that Scott was one of John Tamson's bairns after all, and capable of being a cad now and then like the rest and the best of us. His fault that excludes him from the category of great letter-writers is the determined reticence that underlies the communications even with his dearest friends—communications that look intimate but are not. There never was a human being who looked so open and was so secretive. Even the privileged few who were told who "the author of *Waverley*" was were not told everything about the Waverley Novels, and the secrets of the wizard's laboratory. But even an oyster cannot always be close, and we find in August, 1819, Scott writing to Lady Louisa Stuart that he has put aside *The Monastery* uncompleted in order to start *Ivanhoe*. Scott afterwards pretended that *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery* were composed in the order in which they were published, and Lockhart supports the story with circumstantial assurance, and definitely assigns the inception of *The Monastery* to the late autumn of the year. Why this small deceit? The answer is a curious one, but it had better be reserved until the appearance of Professor Grierson's final volume.

DONALD CARSWELL

## AN APPRECIATION

**The End of a Childhood.** By HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The unevenness of Mrs. Richardson's work is at once the despair and the delight of the critic. At her best she reaches the highest rank with Miss Compton-Burnett and the late Dorothy Edwards; at her worst she sinks into the illiterate and sentimental herd of lady novelists who have been steadily lowering the public's standard of taste during the first thirty years of this century. But always—as much in her bad work as in her best—she discovers an unrivalled power of observation and an ability to record it which is sometimes as faithful, sometimes as unaesthetic, as that of a camera.

The first sixty pages of the book under review give a title to the whole (which, by the by, does not entirely apply); and little else. A sensitive reader, glancing through this story, would be justified in going no further—but he would be wrong. *The End of a Childhood* was obviously meant to be a further volume to *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, but the writer's interest in Cuffy the son could not compare with her interest in Richard the father. The result is an awkward appendix which, unless operated on, will definitely poison the whole body of the former work. But neither is there anything to be said for *The End of a Childhood* if considered by itself. It is maudlin, ill-considered, badly worked out—a blot on the artist's escutcheon. How could Mrs. Richardson, one asks, be content to allow this to be for ever compared with *The Getting of Wisdom*, or even with some of the sketches that appear later on in this book? It is a conundrum with which the student of this author's work will be familiar. The only thing to do is to turn over the pages as quickly as possible. One will very soon forget one's dismay in the stories that follow.

Through the rapid advances made in recent years by the psychological sciences we are more than ever before aware of the trials and troubles of childhood; that even while we watch children playing and laughing together each little prattler is grappling with some bogy of terrifying dimensions—and that play itself is not the inconsequent outpouring of high spirits that our fathers thought it, but a natural preparation for brain and muscle to endure in the struggle to come. Many early difficulties arise from a withholding of knowledge from the child on the part of the adult; and from the foolish belief that this will shield the child from the horrors of growing up. How clearly, in these sketches, does Mrs. Richardson reveal the unfortunate results of such a policy! After reading *The Bathe* and *Conversation in a Pantry*, one is left exasperated at the mentality that was entrusted with the bringing up of these children; and *The Wrong Turning* is another variation of the same hideous theme.

But apart from sudden flashes of genius in the form of dialogue or the clever collocation of words in a phrase, these stories will strike the reader as little more than graphic representation. It is not until half way through the book, in a story entitled *Two Hanged Women*, that the author finds a subject which she is contented to write about, not to explain: an impression, a few bold lines drawn in the hurry of necessity, is often so much clearer than the finished picture which is made from it. In this study of the "abnormal" relations of women Mrs. Richardson has been entirely successful. The poignancy of the situation for the younger girl is finely and unexpectedly balanced by the deeper understanding of the elder, whose silence in the last paragraph, is both an expression of inevitability—a symbolic commentary, as it were, on the story—and a proof of the writer's æsthetic sensibility.

There follow, in the second part of the book, *Two Tales of Old Strasbourg*. In the first, the author contrasts the death of a baby with the teeming life of a great city, and effectually links both in a common futility. This passage will serve as an indication of Mrs. Richardson's descriptive power:

> It was May, and a dazzling morning; streets and houses lay as if new-scoured in the strong, pure light. The steep roofs shone gaily red; their dormer windows flashed and twinkled. In old walled gardens, snowy masses of fruit-blossom seemed to focus the sunlight and give it back intensified. On the banks of the river ancient wood-encrusted buildings, square bridge-towers, the prim, delicate lines of a chateau, all lived again, to their tenderest details, in the water at their feet.

In the second story, *The Professor's Experiment*, the systematic life-in-death of a brother and sister is rudely disturbed by the marriage of the former. But the new element in the household serves only as an agent to bring about change. Elsa dies in childbirth, and her baby shortly afterwards dies, too. But the death of Elsa and her child has a profound effect on the Professor's sister:

> The mysteries of birth and death had been enacted before her: the coming of a new soul, the going forth of one with whom you had shared your daily bread. This was life—what it really meant to be alive—not the humdrum monotony that had always fallen to her lot, which she had put up with only because she knew no better. Advantage had been taken of her ignorance. And by whom? By Paulchen—Paulchen? Who *was* Paulchen that he should demand such a sacrifice? Was his life of so much more worth than hers? She turned her eyes on him, and, as she looked, the scales fell, and she saw him as she had never yet dared to see him: as a mouldy little bookworm, a narrow blear-eyed little delver in abstruse symbols, who lived wrapped up in himself, and for himself alone, without thought or care for the well-being of those around him.

There is a virtuosity in this story which one can only admire—a transposition of the reader's emotional interest from brother to sister: obvious, perhaps, on a second reading; but economically planned and executed.

*The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, an enormous conception in three volumes, is certainly familiar to the critical reader. He will have noticed in particular the attention to detail which relates her work to the great realists—perhaps most closely to Dreiser. (A comparison with Balzac is only not applicable, because Mrs. Richardson has no room for extraneous wit.) The volumes of this trilogy are bound together in an aesthetic whole by a tenacity of purpose; but much of the vigour of the book is wasted in a tiresome expansiveness—especially intrusive with regard to the use of dialogue or the presentation of minor characters (whose influence on the movement of the work is out of all proportion to the space allotted to them)—which, indeed, sometimes partakes of the nature of a pleonastic orgy. It is cruel, perhaps, to prefer the author's early work to her latest. *Maurice Guest* was published nearly thirty years ago. It is a masterpiece: for it contains within it all that the creative artist is forever striving to express in novel form—a perfect harmony of subject and style, balanced by a just use of character and incident. This brings me to the point I wish to make. In *Succedaneum*, the story of a young musician whose creative power has temporarily forsaken him, Mrs. Richardson reaches the perfection of *Maurice Guest*. For this one short story alone *The End of a Childhood* must have a place, an honoured place, on every intelligent reader's shelves.

RICHARD STRACHEY

## AMONG THE NORTHERN BEARS

**The Russian Journals of Martha and Katherine Wilmot, 1803-1808.** *Macmillan.* 21s.

In 1803 Martha Wilmot, an Anglo-Irish girl, went out to Russia on a long visit to Princess Daschkaw, the friend and confidante of Catherine the Great. The lonely, formidable old woman, survivor of a bygone age, on bad terms with her own son and daughter, fell passionately in love with this young guest: in a short time Martha was everything to her. Katherine, an elder sister, joined them in 1805 and stayed two years: Martha remained behind a year longer, and but for the outbreak of war with England might never have had the heart to leave her "Russian mother."

In their portraits the two sisters are almost indistinguishable: in their letters they are very much alike. But Katherine's was the elder mind: she was more travelled and sophisticated, and her style is elaborate compared with Martha's. Katherine was determined to see all she could. She dined at a Russian tavern—there were more than a hundred dishes, and forty bearded men to wait, not to mention a hostess in gold embroidery and diamonds "with her face, neck and arms painted like a doll," and afterwards gipsy dances that enchanted Katherine beyond expression. "Oh, how beautifully they danc'd the Bohemian and Egyptian dances! They look'd exactly like the dancing Figures found in Herculaneum and Pompeia." She went to see the bathing of Sophia, Martha's Russian maid, before her marriage; the bride was led to the bath naked and in floods of tears, by thirty or forty young companions, also naked, who then frolicked and danced round her like a troop of Bacchanals, singing most melancholy songs—while the bride remained silent, weeping copiously. From Katherine we get more than one vivid glimpse of Princess Daschkaw, the old "Fairy":

> In the midst of this immense Establishment. . . . I wish you were to see the Princess go out to take a walk, or rather to look over her subjects! An old brown great coat and a silk handkerchief about her neck worn to rags is her dress, and well may it be worn to rags for she has worn it eighteen years and will continue to do so as long as she lives because it belonged to Mrs. Hamilton. . . . She helps the masons to build walls, she assists with her own hands in making the roads, she feeds the cows, she sings and plays, she writes for the press, she shells the corn, she talks out loud in Church and corrects the priest if he is not devout . . . she is a Doctor, an Apothecary, a Surgeon, a Farrier, a Carpenter, a Magistrate, a Lawyer; in short, she hourly practises every species of incongruity . . . and yet appears as if she had her time a burthen on her hands. . . .
>
> Yesterday morning . . . I happened to come down before Matty and the flash of terror that appeared in her eyes frighten'd me out of my wits for a moment. On enquiry it proved to be her anguish at the notion of Matty's perhaps being unwell. . . .

And no wonder: Martha's letters and journal quite explain such fondness. She is the most artless of travellers and correspondents: her liveliness is not so much (like Katherine's) conscious wit and fancy as a youthful bubbling over of sheer fun. From the moment of entering "the deadly Coach which conveys People to the Pacquet" she is irresistible. This is her first night in St. Petersburg:

> Mme Poliansky would insist that I should feel more comfortable with her *femme de Chambre* in the room, so I yielded for once; and to give you an idea of matters, she brought two pillows which she placed on a second sopha, took off her gown and without more ado . . . she stretch'd on the sopha, and at my request fell into a profound slumber. I then plac'd my Riding Habit, etc., on my Sopha, and with a little more of Ceremony than my fair attendant fell into as equally profound a slumber. . . . Soundly I must have slept, for the first news of the Morning was that so violent a clap of thunder and such vivid lightening had fallen in the night as to have knocked Down a Church!

Writing of Moscow gaieties, she reminds one of Jane Austen:

> Last Wednesday at the Assembly, my cambrick Muslin Gown with the thin worked border, well known on the banks of the Lee, excited a general sensation, and its simplicity and beauty was echoed by people tottering under the weight of Diamonds and Pearls. . . . The Carnival is to commence here in less than a week . . . we are to dress as fine as Jack daws and jostle against each other in genteel crowds from morning to night. . . . Do not suppose they talk of the Punic War taste and the musical Glasses! Believe me, the gentle accents of flattery and the sweet Soothing Sounds of Scandal bear their part.

Or again, lamenting a sudden coolness of her admirer, the Grand Chamberlain Narishkin:

> All I wish for is a fair and open opportunity of receiving with gratitude the offer of his Stars, ribbons, Gold Key, fair Domains and rank, and with infinite Sensibility refusing them all, but at this rate I fear it will never happen.

The Princess's time was divided between Moscow and her favourite estate: Martha, her "Prime Minister," saw a great deal of the peasants and had much sympathy with them. "But the Masters are shallow shallow pated animals as ever encumber'd the earth, poor paultry Dogs, Cerberus's, each possessed of three tongues at least (but much more frequently of five) with which they lick each other from morning till night and Backbite the absent. I am well flatter'd so I may speak." A Mme. Gleboff begged through young Princess Daschkaw for a lock of Martha's hair to make a brooch, "*as there was no procuring anything so beautiful or so rare.* This lady has no sort of attachment to me and is very slightly acquainted." Martha simply told the Princess "that if her friend was fond of raritys I doubted not but the Shops contained several." And those who flattered her were not merely indifferent: as likely as not they were bitter enemies. Sometimes the universal cringing and falseness almost overcame her. "Oh no, language is literally too weak to paint the depravity of every individual almost who breathes this *chilly* atmosphere."

And to be sure, what a *milieu* it was for a young lady who might have been a guest of Eliza Bennett at Longbourne! What stories of barbarousness, of insane cruelty, she heard every day! and not *old* stories: when she came to Russia the mad Czar Paul had been dead only two years. She was continually meeting in society Alexis Orloff and Theodore Bariatinsky, who had strangled Peter III. Of Orloff, whose history she knew, she writes after first seeing him: "He is a monster in appearance and his strength is almost beyond belief—he made me shudder." Of Theodore Bariatinsky, much later:

> Dined at General Knoring's where we met . . . Prince Bariatinsky, and his Brother, so fat and good-humoured looking tho' 'twas his

> hand which helped to do the dreadful act which finished the revolution of 1762. Good heavens, I have admired that man's placid good-natured face twenty different times and never knew till to-day that I was admiring a Murderer, so little does his exterior denote so execrable a Nature and bloodthirsty a disposition !

What a sense of reality this gives one ! And what a world for a Jane Austen heroine ! And she was actually being spied on by the Russian Government. "My God, how melancholy I feel sometimes," she exclaimed in her Journal, when her return home was postponed a second time. Yet her simple nature was wonderfully courageous and resilient, and amid the worst alarms she still "delighted in anything ridiculous."

It would be a shame not to mention two most sprightly letters written home by Eleanor, Katherine Wilmot's Irish maid :

> Ough ! my God ! to see the Country women ! Why wou'dn't they content themselves to dress like Christians ? Miss Henrietta, 'twou'd sour one to look at the Craitures. . . . 'Twou'd make one ashamed to think how they'd ape the quality. . . . Better for them wash their faces and not have so many *Flaighs* hopping about them. That I mightent but it wou'd ! . . . And Ough ! my God ! to hear the Smack and the cry that the Postillions give, and how they drive like Smoke up the Hills ! That I mightent ! but I made full sure to myself that we were fairly out of Ireland then ! . . . Every day at Dinner the life almost leaves me with laughing when I look up at the Blackamoor who brings me up my dinner. "Give me a bit of bread" sais I. "*Glep*" sais he (for the Craiture don't know to call it by its right name.) "Well, then, give me *Glep* if that's your fun," sais I again ; and tho' he talks that way *it is as surely bread as any in Ireland.*"

How have these Journals evaded publication for so long ? Everyone who reads them, I should think, will ask the question. It should be added that the notes (by Mr. H. M. Hyde) are excellent—an entertainment in themselves.

K. JOHN

# AGNOSTICISM

**Fact and Faith.** By J. B. S. HALDANE. *Watts.* 1s.

**The Romance of Reality.** By JANET CHANCE. *Allen and Unwin.* 5s.

The essence of religion is faith, the ability to accept as a truth a hypothesis for which there is no adequate evidence. And faith can be considered as the product partly of desires, conscious or unconscious, partly of environment. Patriotism and the belief in personal immortality are probably the commonest faiths in modern Europe, the former imposed by the community, the latter by the desires of the individual. Probably most human beings are religious, and their faith usually makes them also idolatrous—that is to say, they feel the need to venerate an object, a person, or an institution for qualities which without good reason they attribute to him or it. This need is extraordinarily powerful : and apologists sometimes assume that because it is powerful it must be right. The prophets succeeded in extirpating image-worship among the Jews, but a superstitious veneration for the material scrolls on which the Law is written survives still among Jewish fundamentalists. To-day the decay of traditional religion in Europe is leading to the growth of faiths even more hostile to those who prize free inquiry and the pursuit of truth. Spiritualism, which is spreading as an organised religion, is far more irrational than Catholicism ; and, on the other hand, the transference of worship from immortal gods and saints to successful politicians is similarly retrograde. A Life of Mussolini for children has been published which describes his nativity in language imitated from the Gospels ; and the uncorrupted body of Lenin excites superstitious veneration in many of the pilgrims to its shrine. Moreover, the new idols are more intolerant than the gods they have displaced : Catholic priests, for instance, have distinguished themselves in studies of pre-history which imply the non-historicity of the Pentateuch, but no Nazi would be allowed to controvert the official myth about Aryanism. It is conceivable that this will to believe could be eradicated by a different education, but in the present state of our psychological knowledge no one could guarantee so to bring up an infant that it would be immune. At present many even of the most intelligent people cannot be happy without a *weltanschauung* : and there is no *weltanschauung* for which the evidence is adequate. In the two books under review Professor Haldane aims at proving that agnosticism is intellectually necessary, Dr. Chance that it can be emotionally satisfying. While believing these views to be true, one may be pessimistic about their acceptability.

The biological and geological attack on orthodox Christianity has been remarkably successful. And most educated Christians have in consequence of it jettisoned as unessential the literal interpretation of the Old Testament. At the same time they often suggest that Darwinism has been discredited because further research has necessitated the modification of some of Darwin's hypotheses. This, however, is denied by Professor Haldane, himself a most distinguished biologist. Another notion frequently put forward in pulpits is that modern physics have put God back into the universe. Professor Haldane writes about this with admirable lucidity. Eddington and Jeans, who are chiefly responsible for it, are fine mathematicians, no doubt, but they are very shaky metaphysicians. Because accurate measurement of the moving atom is impossible, Eddington believes in indeterminism and invites us to accompany him to the Meeting-House. Jeans then enters the competition with his hypothesis that the universe is the work of a Great Mathematician, because its phenomena follow mathematical laws. He does not identify this Mathematician, as the clergy often do, with the traditional idea of God. But he would command more respect from many of us if he protested against this identification. For his Mathematician, as far as one can understand, is an entirely amoral being, who expresses himself indifferently in nebulae and cancer-germs. Professor Haldane shows the incompatibility of the reasons given by these two eminent physicists for their metaphysical conclusions. Jeans admits the notion of God on the ground that the universe is regular, Eddington on the ground that it is not.

Professor Haldane complains in his preface of the restrictions he suffers from in a country which remains nominally Christian. How far the majority of Englishmen can be called Christians has recently been the subject of correspondence in this paper. But whether one considers the essence of Christianity to be the acceptance of the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount, or a belief in the basic doctrines of historic Christianity such as Baptismal Regeneration and the authority of the Fathers, the majority of Englishmen do not show themselves to be Christians either by being pacifists or by regularly attending public worship. Yet non-Christians are obliged to observe Christian rules. No one wishes to drive a Christian into a cinema on a Sunday, or to oblige him to remarry when his first wife is still alive. And it ought not to matter to the Christian if unbelievers divorce by mutual consent or amuse themselves on Sundays, since they are, anyhow, damned. Professor Haldane touches a graver point when he complains that owing to Christian influence "children are taught that it is a virtue to accept statements without adequate evidence." Unluckily, children are taught this anyhow, even in countries where the teaching is definitely not Christian ; and patriotism is now the form of religion from which the rationalist has most to fear.

Dr. Chance's book is a spirited defence of the rationalist or agnostic point of view against the misrepresentations of Bishop Barnes, Dean Inge, and other opponents. She claims that the acceptance of "reality" without the embroidery of any myth can form the basis of an "idealism" as disinterested and altruistic as that of Christianity ; also that such "realism" can bring serenity and ecstasy. Her book is full of common sense, but she seems unaware of the philosophical problems involved. No one can have any conception what "reality" is, and though, doubtless, she uses "reality" as a convenient name for the sum of phenomena, she never considers the possibility of "idealism" in the narrow sense of the word. Her book, however, may be useful to those who have lost their religious faith and find the world a bleak place without it. In her account of the consolations of the "realist" she possibly exaggerates the value of sexual emotion, and certainly under-estimates the value of art. Artists like Beethoven and Shakespeare and Rubens give us a richness of experience which is the truest equivalent of the consolations of religion. You may escape your miseries in the company of the person you love, but, what is far more important, you can accept and, as it were, digest them with the help of art. Unluckily, most human beings seem to be incapable of finding ecstasy either in art or in a modified stoicism such as Dr. Chance suggests. But the evidence available suggests that, even when conformity to a religion has been most general, only a minority has found in it any profound or mystical satisfaction. When material distresses such as poverty and overwork have been abolished, the more delicate problem will remain of developing a race capable of living in harmony with its environment.

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## BECONTREE: A RETROSPECT

**Report on Becontree and Dagenham.** By TERENCE YOUNG. *Social Survey Committee.* 10s. 6d.

Few people are aware of the attempt by the L.C.C. to build a satellite town at Becontree for London's excess population. Yet the town with a population now of 120,000 deserves as much attention as the garden cities or the main road efforts of the speculative builder. The council were compelled to choose a site far outside their own area, leaving all the costly provision of public services, including education, in the unwilling hands of other local authorities. Unfortunately some time after the commencement of building the site was shared among three different local authorities, two of which later became municipal boroughs! The growth of a proper satellite town with a strong community consciousness received a check from which it seems unlikely to recover.

Placed far to the East of Greater London, people moving from the central area found that at first transport to their work place was not only costly but extremely difficult and tiresome. It is evident that means of transport must always be developed at the start, if such a satellite town is to grow without frequent checks. The scheme envisaged, with the optimism in economic matters that only town planners possess, that factories would flock to the chosen site. If, however, they had studied the economic development of London they would have realised that factories were being built not to the East but to the North and West. Modern factory development in the East was, and still is, hindered by relatively poor road and rail communications, which are gradually being improved at great cost.

Designed by architects on garden city principles, Becontree shows the intrinsic wrongheadedness of applying them on a large scale. The facts presented so ably in this volume by Mr. Young lead one to conclusions not always favoured by the author himself. Houses scattered evenly at twelve to the acre, with little shrubberies at the junctions of winding roads and in culs-de-sac, compel the inhabitants to walk in a long and roundabout fashion to reach many desired places. A number of small shopping centres evenly dispersed were provided, without allowing for the growth of at least one main shopping centre where big stores and entertainment facilities could easily grow. Sites for halls and churches were allowed in the plan, but they possess little relation to the small shopping centres placed at the junctions of main road arteries. With few halls, public-houses met the need of clubs and societies for meeting places; and the brewery companies were not unwilling to advance money on mortgage for premises for working-men's clubs in return for the licence.

Town planners in their pleasure at designing a pretty lay-out overlook the desire of town dwellers to live in a close community. A garden is only a partial compensation for the lack of easily reached social pleasures. "Pathetic attempts are made on Saturdays at some of the shopping centres of Becontree to regain the atmosphere of this noisy and crowded shopping" of the main roads of Central London.

Children require frequent small open spaces in which to play together; to them, the numerous ornamental shrubberies are merely the nocturnal playgrounds of cats and dogs. Adults prefer the social atmosphere of a crowded shopping centre with the chance of meeting friends, and the public-house, the club and the cinema close by, to the scattered social institutions and hygienic spacious centres of Becontree.

Social bodies find it hard enough to organise their work in a new area devoid of a sense of community, without unnecessary physical obstacles. In the circumstances, it is a matter for surprise that they should have done on the whole as well as they appear to have done.

Town planners alone cannot solve the problem of rehousing our urban populations, particularly when they are hindered by the numerous administrative boundaries of a built-up area such as Greater London. They must be compelled to use their skill at the service of informed students of town life, for the pulls of economic and social ties refuse to be permanently enshrined in a nice symmetrical design.

M. I. MICHAELS

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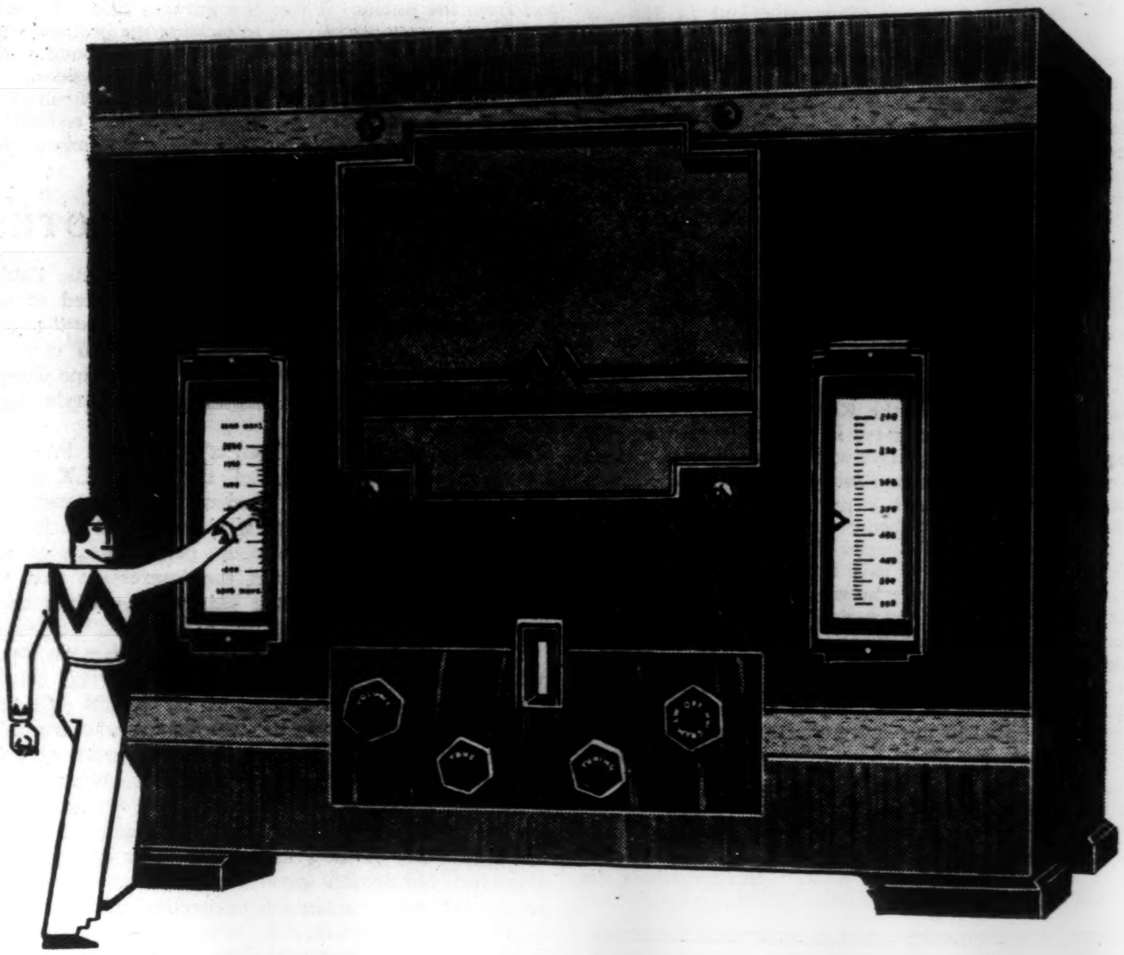
## SHORTER NOTICES

**Secrets of Siberia.** By PIERRE DOMINIQUE. Translated from the French by WARRE B. WELLS. *Hutchinson.* 10s. 6d.

M. Dominique apparently—it is all rather vague—travelled with a party of journalists through Siberia, being given exceptional opportunities for seeing, and criticising, the amazing industrial development of the country which is taking place under the Plan. His story, despite the slovenliness of its telling, is curiously impressive, both for the facts it discloses and for the intellectual honesty of the narrator that enables him, with all his innate humanitarian instincts violated, to see, albeit as in a glass darkly, something of the miracle that is taking place. Much of the book is devoted to descriptions of the misery that accompanies these huge industrial experiments, in which tens of thousands of peasants are being compulsorily converted into artificers and townsmen. Work is hard and ill-paid and food is scarce, and everywhere M. Dominique found a callousness to suffering that appalled him. But he is never blinded to the fact that those in authority are building for the future, and by their continual visible achievement—scamped and inferior as much of their present work inevitably is—creating an atmosphere of pride and assurance that enables the people to suffer patiently their present ills confident that through the Plan, even though the five years were ultimately stretched to fifty, they will win through. It is a pity that M. Dominique did not, or was not, allowed to give us photographs—on the lines of that of Novo-Sibirsk—of the great industrial towns of Kouznietsk and Magnitogorsk that he describes so vividly and criticises so acutely. If photographs were forbidden it is difficult to understand why.

**Henry Moore.** With an appreciation by HERBERT READ. *Zwemmer.* 6s.

Although Henry Moore is one of the most important artists working in England to-day, and has an international reputation, he is still comparatively little known here, and this is the first book which has been devoted to his work. It is cheap, representative and very well produced. Henry Moore says in *Unit One* that what he is most interested in is the human figure, and that he tries to interpret it through his sculpture without forcing his materials into forms unnatural to them. This Mr. Read explains and develops in his introduction. He adds curiously: "his whole art consists in effecting a credible compromise between these forms and the concepts of his imagination." But it is just when Moore makes a compromise that he fails. Three stages can clearly be seen in his work, even from photographs. The first where his concept is dominated by the human form, which is naturalistic without being slick or pretty; the second where the idea of forms natural to his materials has made him compromise by distorting the human figure at some points and not at others—when his concept is subjected to a conflict of flesh and stone; and the third, by far the most impressive, where the concept is the most important and has solved the problem by abstraction. This is not compromise but expression.



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**In Morocco with the Legion.** By G. WARD PRICE. *Jarrolds.* 18s.

**Off With His Head!** By GEOFFREY BRYAN. *Hutchinson.* 18s.

Both of these books in different ways pander to the tastes of the bloodthirsty. Mr. Ward Price, who has had a long experience as a war correspondent, observed the recent operations of the French Foreign Legion in Morocco against the Berber tribesmen; and *In Morocco With the Legion* is his account of that campaign. He gives a brief history of this famous corps, and his pages are filled with the exploits of past and present legionaries. In the author's opinion the severity of the French disciplinary measures are grossly overstated by deserters. Mr. Bryan's book is a gruesome commentary on the sadistic impulses of mankind; and it is difficult to believe that normal people will derive much entertainment from it. But it is true that an execution has always, in the past, proved the most popular form of entertainment; and now that these spectacles are denied us the loss may, if needed, be made good by such a work as Mr. Bryan's. The author writes in an unconcerned and sprightly style, which is probably due to a long familiarity with his subject. All the most famous victims and their executioners are faithfully described from the days of Ashur Nazir to Louis Philippe.

**Through Deep Defiles to Tibetan Uplands.** By HERBERT STEVENS. *Witherby.* 10s. 6d.

Although attached as zoologist to the Kelly-Roosevelt Expedition, Mr. Stevens was for the most part engaged in collecting independently of the main expedition, and generally, save when travelling with chance acquaintances, was the leader and sole European in his own retinue. It must be said at once that the book is primarily of interest to the systematic zoologist, every chapter being packed with references—scientific rather than popular—to the species of mammal, bird or insect taken or met with. Here and there we have a graphic description, such as the momentary appearance of three brown bears; and continually we are impressed by the splendour and variety of the scenery through which the expedition passed. Mr. Stevens's route was *via* Northern Burma, to the uplands of Eastern Tibet, and thence through the Middle Kingdom on to Shanghai. The author's style is curiously disconcerting, his love for the unexpected and unrelated parenthesis and his closely packed sentences make it difficult to follow him; but when one catches the trick of it one finds the matter almost, if not quite, excuses the manner.

**Unemployment Relief: The Basic Problem.** By E. F. STEVENSON. *Allen and Unwin.* 6s.

Mr. Stevenson is not concerned here with the causation of unemployment but with the consideration of "satisfactory methods of helping the human beings who are actually out of work." In approaching the subject he gives a most useful account of the attitudes adopted by statecraft and public opinion during the past hundred years. Prevention, relief, occupation, employment are terms which he subjects to clear analysis, and he dwells most profitably upon the difference between remunerative work as regarded from the private standpoint and from the public. There is a growing field for public enterprise and for voluntary associations in tackling the problem: "The field of such employment is precisely the area of economic activity which is socially desirable but not under existing conditions commercially profitable" (p. 274). He shirks none of the difficulties which accrue from his recognition that bare maintenance is not enough and discusses the relations of unemployment with population, immigration and other large issues in a very helpful way.

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## GRAMOPHONE NOTES

IN the opinion of most continental musicians, Paul Hindemith is considered to be one of the most talented of contemporary composers. He was born in 1895, so he is still under forty, but it is already possible to form some general conception of his music, for he has one of the marks of a genuine composer that he is not at all eclectic, but a definite unity of style characterises all his work.

His latest work to be issued is his Second String Trio (1933) for violin, viola and 'cello (Col., three 12in., LX 311–313), played by Simon Goldberg, Paul Hindemith and Emmanuel Feuermann. It is beautifully played with a crispness and distinction that are a model for trio playing; also the playing has a convincing air of quiet assurance which gives the impression that whatever the listener may think of it the players themselves understand the music thoroughly.

The string trio is almost the ideal combination for gramophone recording, and it is a pleasure to listen to this excellent record, quite apart from one's opinion of the music. At a first hearing it is likely to prove baffling to music-lovers who are unfamiliar with Hindemith's style, but I think those who persevere with it will come to enjoy it very much indeed. What makes it difficult is the extreme freedom of the parts. It is true that Beethoven in his last quartets reached a very high degree of free part-writing, which was one of the reasons why these quartets were found so difficult. Hindemith pushes this independence still further; yet this is not done arbitrarily or mechanically, but in the endeavour to get the maximum of expressiveness. This Second String Trio is in three movements, which do not correspond to the old grouping of fast and slow movements. The first movement is the most tentative, and the second and third movements have a more vital impulse. As usual with Hindemith, the music abounds in invention and whimsical fancy, but it is never long-winded or diffuse. For those who want to hear a good example of modern music that is genuine and of our time, I can strongly recommend this Second String Trio.

The newly formed Bach Society has issued Bach's Goldberg Variations, played on the harpsichord by Wanda Landowska (H.M.V., six 12in. in album, D.B. 4908–4913). As these Variations were written for Goldberg, a pupil of Bach's, to play to Kaiserling to cure him of sleeplessness, it is possible to argue that the harpsichord is more soothing than the modern pianoforte, and, therefore, it was particularly appropriate to have them recorded by Wanda Landowska on the harpsichord. Some people, however, would have preferred them recorded on the pianoforte, but I presume there will be a pianoforte recording at some time or other, if there isn't one already. Miss Landowska plays with a clear intelligence and nimble fingers, and this recording will be in much request by Bach lovers. No doubt it was originally written by Bach for a two manual keyboard because the two manuals *forte* and *piano* had not been combined together in one instrument, the pianoforte; but I doubt whether the claim that the part-writing is made clearer on the harpsichord than on the pianoforte is justified. I should think it all depended on the player.

Two numbers from Smetana's opera *The Bartered Bride* are something of a novelty—Sextette from Act III, Noch ein Weilchen, Marie—and Duet from Act II, Wer in Lieb entbrannt (Col., one 12in., LX 316), but they are not particularly inspired items and the Duet suffers from a common fault of having the singers too prominent.

Apart from these, the month brings only another recording of the overture to *Don Giovanni*, played by Sir Henry Wood and the London Symphony Orchestra (Col. one 12in. DX 587), and two operatic airs, one "Depuis le jour" from *Louise*, and the other, recitative and aria of Lia from *L'Enfant Prodigue* (Col., one 12in., LS 315).

T.

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It is difficult to know whether to advertise this as (1) likely to be the Autumn's most amusing book—or (2) the best mystery story we have published for a long time. DOROTHY L. SAYERS places it first on her list and says *'continuously interesting and exciting.'* 7/6

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This book exhibits Mr. Wilenski's power of thinking clearly about a subject which has not provoked much clear thought before. 7/6

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Mr. Joad's 'belligerent autobiography' has now been reissued in the *Rose & Crown Library.* 5/-

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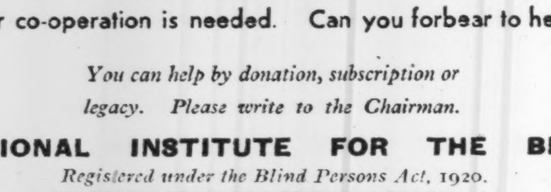

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# Week-end Competitions

## No. 235

**Set by Norman Collins**

Japan has banned the words "Papa" and "Mama" as un-Japanese. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best list of English equivalents of the distressingly un-English words *flair, métier, chassis, garage, hors-d'oeuvre, omelette, soufflé, negligé, déshabille, bête noire, affaire,* and *fête*. The equivalents must not run to more than two words, either hyphenated or not as desired.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, September 21.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

## RESULT OF COMPETITION 233

**Set by Seacape**

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a set of verses, not exceeding twenty lines, in which are transposed the initial sounds, or other parts, of two or more words, *e.g.*:

" The grass who leaves her swollen stain
Is socked with morrow truly-nod,
As sprinter weds her wings again
And see-trap sickens in the quad."

(By the special permission of the proprietors of *Punch*).

**Report by Seacape**

This, I thought, would be a nice little exercise in metathesis, the sort of thing that could be taken down to the beach on a fine day and there dealt with summarily, without need for any book of reference. But H.C.M., whose experience in these matters goes back far into the old *Saturday Review* days, declares it one of the most difficult competitions that have been set. I suppose it looks easier than it is. Most competitors managed to produce a fairly ludicrous jumble of sound, but few succeeded in confining their absurdities to words which, when transposed, were still flesh and blood of the King's English. And if some of the best of the changelings were not quite what the late Dr. Spooner might have been moved to perpetrate, it was all very amusing. Once or twice I had to stop and take off my hat to those pioneers of his, the " half-warmed fish " and the " shoving leopard." But most of the attempts were pleasantly new to me. I must confess that the adjudication would have been rather more of a brain-racking business than I expected, had not several competitors, out of a kindly consideration for the judge, despoonered their lines themselves. The following specimens deserve mention: " my fad, a dahlia," " sabre-laving " (Peter Hadley); " nosey cooks " (Richard Hines); " a hole in seven," " battered scones," " dines in the shark," " nigger in the fight," " lemon dove," " dries out in creams " (Miss G.); " glossy men," " while plovers lay " (Chauve-Souris); " the blight of fat," " to woo the magic trews " (L. V. Upward); " her haven rare " (Toledo); " tastes the worm," " wimple sage " (Anon); " the pain roars " (H.C.M.); " lousy drover," " the death of brawn," " fear to swallow " (Una); " he gives maize to the prune " (Midas).

The entries that survived a fourth reading were those of Little Billee, Pibwob, Guy Innes and Midas. I have no doubt in recommending that the First Prize should go to Little Billee, who is brisk and happy throughout and has a good ending. I liked Midas's entry, but thought that the artifice was a little too forced. Between Pibwob and Guy Innes there was not much to choose, but on the whole I preferred Pibwob, who therefore takes Second Prize. Guy Innes, nevertheless, has many good turns: " A Bristol crook that owes for flowers," " buttered showers," " hide a ghost," " magic treasure roars and sings," " biding guards," " pates of girl," " bought by cards," and " soap the e'en " for " ope the scene."

### FIRST PRIZE

I shove that lady, plural race
Where leading plovers kill and boo—
They do not need a spot of lace
To exercise the weans to moo,
And there's a sort of greasing place
In all the dithering they blue.

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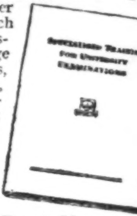
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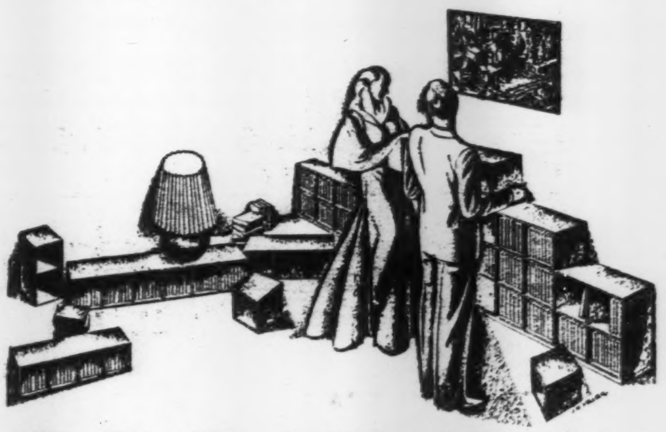

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Twixt littering glass and muddling can
The misses count a lucky plot;
They're peeling fashion's spurious fan;
And she gets high as he gets shot;
Oh, let no curious frying pan
Their churning beaks to hush more blot.

This tragic meat, this guzzling-name,
It's hell to waste with cheques and beer;
Oh, soulful dinner, burst to flame,
Why luff your pips with snouting deer?
Remember you may set the game
If Stupid kicks his narrow ear!

LITTLE BILLEE

### SECOND PRIZE

### ENGLISH SUMMER

See how our nuns become as livid vamps
Whose spooning need is flighty in its might!
And see our stamp of cars in clamorous gamps,
The plumber's sanitary lolling rite!

Now spuds unboiled 'mid purling kettles lie,
Now blavering quackbirds try among the fleas,
While waiting mild dons swot the scooted fly,
And wittycakes swarm in the sopping cheese.

Suitable moles are caught by snappy hares;
The hen that moped for thundrous wings—how blessed!
These corns, that maim, doom cattle and all bears,
When, sure, the sheik may wear a risible vest.

When England's rational noses tear a wipe,
Our littering gland of Fulldogs boiled the yoke
Of florin fags, until the rhymes were type
To maffick on the train—a furious coke!

PIBWOB

## CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

### PROBLEM 90.—ALTERNATIVES

Boozle, the eccentric wine merchant, left the following curious will.

"I bequeath to my children the sum of money named in the margin hereof. This is to be divided in one of the two following ways:

"*First alternative.* The sum may be divided into as many amounts as there are children. In this case: (1) Each amount must consist of an exact number of pounds; (2) No two amounts are to be the same; (3) The number of pounds in each separate amount is to be a factor of the total. (4) It will be found that every factor of the total is included. When the division has been effected my children will draw lots as to which of these sums they shall respectively inherit.

"*Second alternative.* A smaller sum (also named in the margin hereof) may be divided among my sons on lines exactly comparable to those prescribed above for the division of the whole sum. Each son is then to receive in addition a further sum of £20. This will leave for each of my daughters exactly £1,000."

*How many sons and daughters respectively had Boozle?*

### PROBLEM 88.—THE NEURASTHENIC

I am surprised at the apparent difficulty of this cryptogram. The clue is the ship's position "Lat. 28.46 N, Long. 138.49 E."

2 S S
8 N E U R A S T H
4 E N I C
6 S U N K B Y
1 C
3 O M M
8 U N I S T S A U
4 G U S T
9 T H I R D 1 9 3 2

*i.e.*, "S.S. Neurasthenic sunk by Communists, August 3rd, 1932."

Very few solvers, however, have spotted the relevance of the figures. More have worked out the message as a "straight" anagram.

### PROBLEM 87.—DR. SPAIRTHEROD

A set of Low's cartoons goes to A. D. Thackeray, King's College, Cambridge.

There were 110 correct solutions.

*Eight* points are awarded.

### PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

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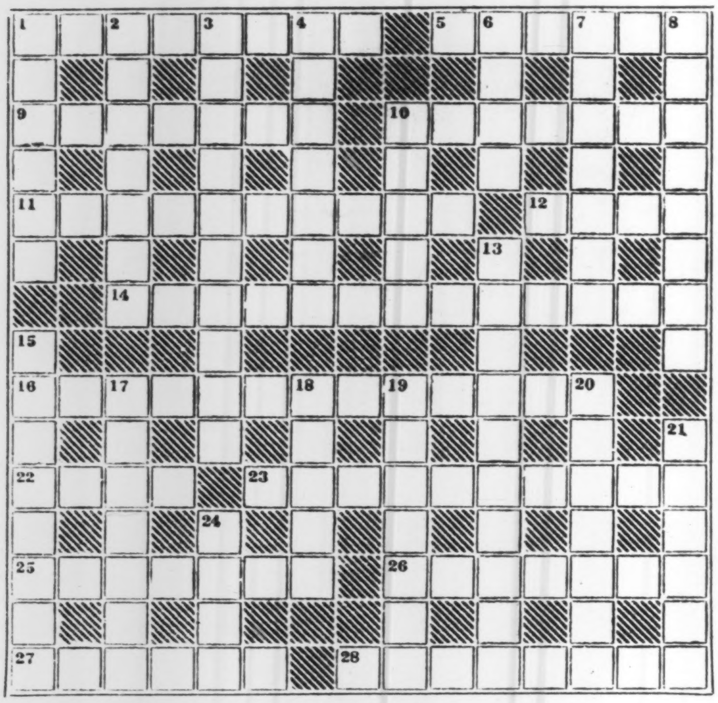
In addition a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize, consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

CALIBAN

## WEEK-END CROSSWORD 236

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is Miss McConnell, 3 Harcourt Buildings, E.C.
(Will Mrs. G. M. Wratten please send her address?)

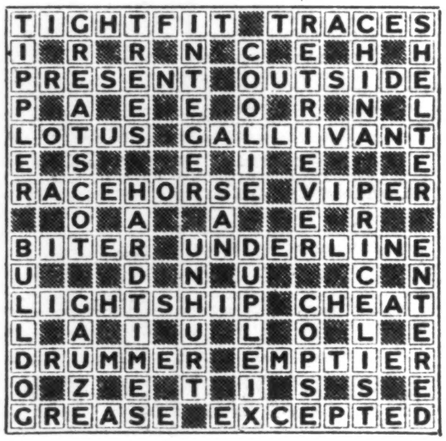
ACROSS

1. George Washington gave this ancient poet the lie.
5. The kind of ricks that often smoke.
9. Forbidden to 3 in spite of Omar.
10. Tea and tobacco are so mixed.
11. This child performs with cooked chicken legs.
12. Ancient serving animal.
14. They shine theatrically not only at Cambridge.
16. The sculptor who painted.
22. The most valuable type.
23. Goes after big game in a sociable way.
25. Eventual forerunners.
26. Follows the devil until the game ends.
27. In March Uncle Sam found them unacceptable as payments.
28. That some are free suggests that others are imprisoned for their opinions.

DOWN

1. Laid in the beginning of 1 across.
2. One's last one has no connection with Domesday Book.
3. One of a prophet's following.
4. Racehorse re-incarnation of a Milanese painter.
6. Sounds like a drop in rank.
7. This swimmer is no doubt often a martyr to his liver.
8. One of the things Mr. Pooter wished after the party that he had put aside.
10. Hiss a holy man.
13. Indispensable in a dead language.
15. A fashionable coiffure?
17. Precedence among taxis.
18. What a windbag this puzzle setter is.
19. "Lo, all our pomps of yesterday Is one with —— . . ."
20. What Medusa used to do with stony results.
21. Places made for putting down.
24. Money sounding like a place of 26.

### LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



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